ALTHOUGH COMPASS is a journal of topical theology we rarely treat topics of breaking news. The logistics of producing such a journal as this do not allow us to discuss the hottest topics at the time of publication. However, there is some advantage in being just a little behind the latest news, because our contributors are given time to write up their more considered thoughts with a measure of calm when the dust has settled after the events.

The contributions of this issue have all been enriched by the generous stretch of thinking time that elapsed between the events and the reporting of them. The early articles look back over one hundred years of missionary endeavour among the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory. They make fascinating reading. However we weigh up the positives and negatives of the missionary efforts and the theologies that informed them, we have to admire the creative imagination and inventiveness of the missionaries. Damage was done to Aboriginal culture and social systems, but some purification was achieved, too. And the missionaries were in there with the people, wanting the best for them, sometimes ensuring their very survival, especially during the period when the general population totally neglected them, and some individuals actively worked for their extermination.

The ultimate goal of the missionary’s work among the Aboriginal people was to convert them to Christianity. In the earlier time this meant the people were being asked to renounce their aboriginal religion. In later, post-Vatican II times, a different theology came into practice and efforts were made to discern the Spirit of God at work in the customs and cultures of the people:

[The missionaries] should be familiar with [the people’s] national and religious traditions and uncover with gladness and respect those seeds of the Word which lie hidden among them. (Vatican II, Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity, par. 11.)

This story of the hundred years of effort in the Northern Territory has more than academic and historical interest for the rest of us. In our time the whole of Australia has become a place of missionary endeavour. Our population may once have been to some degree Christian but our contemporaries are now largely dechristianized, and a new evangelisation effort is required. As with the Aboriginal Australians over the past century, so with our contemporary dechristianised Australians, we need to discern where the Spirit of God is at work among them, and what is our specific role and challenge as Christian missionaries.

Some general thoughts on both those questions suggested themselves to me as I watched the Schools Spectacular on the television in early December. The Schools Spectacular is an annual end-of-school-year presentation by combined public schools of NSW. It is a variety entertainment celebration featuring (in 2006) 3000 talented school pupils—singers, dancers and musicians. The Spectacular is acknowledged in the Guinness Book of Records as the world’s biggest variety show. The young performers had been rehearsing for months in over three hundred schools from the outback to the inner city, and they threw themselves into the performance with heart-warming joy and energy.

The theme of the show this year was ‘Shine’ and the performance, we were told, aimed to take the audience ‘to the very soul of Australia’. I wondered what that might mean in a presentation by public schools. As it turned out, the ‘soul’ was in some way related to a range of fundamental values and concerns: environment, land, nature, aboriginals, reconciliation, justice and harmony, peace, acceptance, multiculturalism. These are aspirations and
concerns that we see as integral to our calling as Christians, that we recognise as central to living of Gospel. Yes, I thought, in these values and concerns that are seen as expressions of the soul of Australia, we can ‘uncover with gladness and respect (...) seeds of the Word’, or at least signs of the Spirit at work in the secular culture.

At the same time, however, there was nothing of the Christian message, and no mention of religion of any kind during the whole two hours and thirty minutes. Fair enough, I thought, public schools do what public schools do—they are institutions for secular education.

Still, I did find myself getting a little impatient when the performers spent a good twenty minutes reciting, singing and dancing about the festive season of Christmas and managed to avoid all mention of the mystery celebrated at Christmas. Santa Claus and his reindeers got a good run, also Frosty the Snowman, and we dreamed of a white Christmas. One young singer-song-writer sang his own composition about the Christmas Beetle—we will hear more of him, he was good. But the celebration of Christmas had been emptied of its significance.

In a free country we let people celebrate Christmas as they see fit. But my viewing of the Schools Spectacular was a clear reminder to me of our calling and challenge as believing Christians—our proud calling and challenge—to tell the story, not only the story of Christmas but the whole love story of God and us his People—to tell the story, keep it alive, and celebrate it with joy in our secular culture.

I was in the city doing some Christmas shopping the day following the Schools Spectacular, and I saw a Salvation Army lady on the footpath outside David Jones making her appeal for donations for the poor. She had a banner that declared: ‘Jesus is the reason for the season’. I thought to myself, ‘Good on yer, lady!’

In the Prayer of the Church about the same time, my attention was caught by the following verses from psalm 51 which sum up what Christian life is about:

- I will thank you for evermore;
- for this is your doing.
- I will proclaim that your name is good,
  in the presence of your friends.

Being a Christian entails conversion. It entails striving to humanize our world, and sharing the fundamental aspirations of the rest of the human race. But what makes us distinctively Christian, besides conversion, is the telling of the Good News—keeping the Story alive, celebrating it—and, most importantly, being inspired by it in our daily lives and relationships.

* * * *

The value of adequate thinking time between events and comment upon them in COMPASS is also seen in the two articles that address Christian-Muslim relations and that speech of Pope Benedict at the University of Regensberg. It is not sufficient to say, ‘Ah well, the pope did make a bad move...but the reaction was over the top!’ The episode shook the world to some degree and we need to reflect upon it at depth and learn what needs to be learned. The articles we offer give us food for thought. Arabs, both Muslim and Christian, have had to put up with a lot for a long time—that must have something to do with these events.

As we enter the year 2007 our annual prayer for peace among peoples and nations and for our on-going survival on this planet is more intense and urgent than ever. Pope Benedict’s peace message this year is that respect for the dignity of every person of whatever race or creed or station in life is the foundation of peace on earth. A timely message! But it is not a new message—it has been recurring in the pope’s statements since the beginning of his pontificate.

—Barry Brundell MSC, Editor
T HIS AFTERNOON we are going to reflect on the missiological theory and practice used by Bishop Gsell and his fellow missionaries in the Northern Territory over the last one hundred years. Tomorrow we shall be exactly one hundred years away from Fr F X Gsell’s arrival on Darwin’s wharf as the Administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of Victoria-Palmerston, which eventually evolved into becoming the Diocese of Darwin with F X Gsell msc being ordained its first bishop in 1938.

Cultural and Missionary Expansion

I would like to creep up on my topic. As a person trained in Scholastic philosophy, I like to get back to principles of Being. I remember very clearly one particular day in Rome back in 1958 when I was in the early stages of writing my doctorate thesis at the Gregorian University. I had prepared the first chapter, and wanted to show it to my thesis director, Father de Finance. I waited at the door of the lecture room, where he was giving an emotive and impassioned lecture on the nature and goodness of Being. He was speaking about the transcendental properties of Being, especially that Being is good and, as such, Being is essentially self-expanding. In the words of a classical dictum of Scholastic philosophy, *bonum est sui diffusivum*. Goodness, and Being itself, is expansive, spreads itself. This was taken to be a first principle, something an intelligent mind simply perceives. Not something you have to prove. At the end of his impassioned talk about the generosity of Being he stepped down from the rostrum and made for the door, where I was waiting with the draft of my first chapter. I approached him and said, Here is the first chapter of my thesis for you to check, please. He threw up his arms in the air—he was a Frenchman—and cried out, ‘I am too busy!’ I was thus introduced to the further lesson that the generosity of Being is grand in theory but has its limitations in practice…

All the same, I believe, that consideration of the essentially expansive nature of Being is relevant to our present discussion. We are considering the missionary impulse that drove men and women to leave their native country and take on a pretty uncomfortable way of life amongst a people foreign to them in every way. Why did François Xavier Gsell and so many other European men and women make the choice to go on mission to foreign countries on the other side of the globe, this one?

The most obvious response is to quote the missionary mandate of Jesus himself when he said: “Go forth and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” A Christian does not need to search any further, except maybe in order to get a deeper appreciation of the reason behind the evangelical commission. It is the command of the Lord! That is enough. To ask why the Lord would have given such a command is like wondering why Jesus himself came at all. Theologians do wonder about such things. St Anselm defined theology as ‘faith seeking understanding’—*fides quae rerum intellectum*, but we are struggling for substance when we get to ultimate questions.

A non-believer would not be impressed by the mere recitation of verses from the Bible, but would want to ask for deeper underlying reasons outside of biblical realms. Here I call upon the resources of philosophy.
First of all, I would like to lay down a succinct definition of ‘culture’ as ‘the human way of being.’ Particular cultures vary in the ways they embody and express particular modalities in the virtually limitless possible variety. In and through the human persons cultures are alive and have an inner dynamism. Some are more reflective, self-conscious, self-aware than others. Some are more active and expansive. They vary in the way they activate their potential—outwardly, aggressively, contemplatively, pacifically, inventively. Their inner dynamism has periods, highs and lows, is guided, driven, raised up or dragged down, improved or spoilt by the particular minds and wills in which they are incorporated at any particular time. They have a history and a dynamic direction.

**Application to the Northern Territory**

In something of a Teihardian stance, I see we have two massive interconnecting cultural movements to attend to. There was the colonial expansion of European culture during the second millennium, and the missionary expansion of Christianity during the same time, but particularly in the second half of the millennium. The cultures were simply expanding. When the Jesuits came to the Territory in the 1880s, they summed up their task thus:

Religion is primary in our intention, but in a manner secondary in our practice, because we recognize that we must first civilize the blacks before we can Christianize them…(MacKillop 1893, cf. Wilson 1988:13)

Bishop Gsell stated the same principle and Bishop O’Loughlin after him. In his masterly recent study of the missiology operating in Darwin diocese during the episcopacy of Bishop John O’Loughlin Fr Peter Hearn quotes some succinctly worded notes made by Bishop O’Loughlin while on pastoral visitation to Port Keats mission around 1958. He summarised the mission’s role under three heads:

A) **Evangelize**—establish church:
   a) catechists, b) sisters, c) brothers and priests.

B) **Civilize**: a) Christian family…home; b) schooling; c) livelihood garden, stock, timber, arts and crafts.

C) **Integrate**: a) cattle stations; b) Farms on Daly [River]. (Hearn 2003:25)

Sometimes the first head was stated as ‘Christianize’. Peter Hearn shows that the mission policy implemented by the Catholic Church in the first half of last century was standard vanilla-flavoured missiology. The missionary aimed to ‘save souls’, both the people’s souls and his or her own in the process. (It might be noted that the word ‘missiology’ itself is a neologism. It came into use during the 1900’s. The Oxford Reference Dictionary of 2003 still refuses to recognise it. All the same, it is a convenient tag to cover the theory and practice of evangelisation. It is interdisciplinary in extent. In spite of the opinion of the Oxford dictionary, university chairs of missiology do exist.)

Two giant waves broke upon the Australian shore at the same time: European colonial extension and Christian missionary expansion operating within two major sections of the church, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. The details of the complex interaction between these elements in the earlier part of Australian history need not absorb our time and attention now. Here the main thing to note is the extraordinary convergence between colonial and missionary expansion achieved here in the Territory in the early part of the 20th century. The government was happy to use the missions as its ‘agents’ in the work of social
development, the church’s ministers being considered, and paid, as government field officers under the title of ‘superintendent’, later ‘community advisor’.

Bishop O’Loughlin expressed his complete satisfaction with the system in the speech he gave at the official opening of the Daly River mission in 1955.

On an occasion like this it is surely a proper time to comment on the enlightened policy of Australian Government towards its native wards…Briefly it is this: to extend welfare services to a section of the community who, because of their history and primitive culture are unable of themselves to be assimilated into the life of the Australian society. In this extension Government recognises and assists Missionary Societies prepared to engage in this work. In fact, Mr. Hasluck has expressed the view that Government and missions are ‘co-partners in a joint enterprise’. This is eminently just and fair, accepting a principle of subsidising social services which has not yet found acceptance in the Australian community at large. (Hearn 2003:23)

I suppose it is useful to note that the style of language used even in official places last century would be frowned upon today—well-meaning but very patronising. I think some present here today might remember wincing at Bishop O’Loughlin’s deliberate public use of the term ‘myall’, which he defended as being technically exact and therefore inoffensive. Bishop Gsell made the point even more forcefully: ‘no one, I think, would dare to deny that the true faith is the generating force of civilization.’ (Gsell 1956:38) Many non-believers would indeed deny that true faith is genetically connected to civilisation. Them Bishop Gsell responds to by an argumentum ad hominem:

…these fine talkers, few of whom have given the subject any deep thought, themselves enjoy the benefits of Christian civilization: and they enjoy this security because, in day[s] of old, missionaries brought these benefits to their forebears. The heathens [viz. the unconverted Aborigines] are men as we are men and, as such, they have the same right that we have to the benefits of Christianity. (Gsell 1956:38-39)

Bishop O’Loughlin used much the same argument in his speech at the opening of the Daly River mission in 1955, though with an intriguing turn of phrase he aligned himself more diplomatically with the critics of mission:

We others, even when we disclaim religious belief or practice, continue to live within the framework of a civilization rooted and founded in Christianity. We are the heirs, often unwittingly, of centuries of Christian teaching.

It is too much to expect the aborigines to survive and be assimilated without the faith. (Hearn 2003:24)

‘Civilise’

The key concept in this view of evangelisation is the word and concept ‘civilise’. By origin it indicates a person living in a civis, that is, a city or a city state. It indicates organisation and structure, systems of responsibility. Up here in the Territory the Jesuits on the Daly River saw their first task in time was to ‘civilise’. Evangelisation would come later, the ultimate goal.

The Jesuits used an agrarian model based on the very successful social reconstruction the Jesuit Society had built up in Paraguay some 200 years earlier. They considered they could do nothing of lasting value with the Aborigines, as before with the Paraguayan Indians, unless they could get them to settle down on small farms where the Aborigines could achieve economic independence, their children could go to school and become educated, that is, learn to read and write.

‘To become civilised’ meant to become settled down, basically as a farmer. This proposition is presented as self-evident. Bishop Gsell did not think the task of transforming Aboriginal society into an agrarian one would be easy, but it was the way to go and he was a patient man. He wrote:

…whatever may be said to the contrary, it is not impossible to reform the aboriginal attitude towards life so that he can become a planter
and, indeed, a good Christian. Yes, the process must be long and inevitably obstructed by difficulties; but how many centuries did it take white men to emerge from barbarity? The main thing is to face up to the task and to stick to it, trusting in God. (Gsell 1956:39)

On these terms, the ones who became ‘civilised’ were the Brothers. In the early days of each of the mission stations the Brothers put in countless hours of hard labour planting extensive vegetable gardens and orchards. These were an economic necessity as transport to outlying missions was so difficult, often quite impossible for months during the Wet season. Work in the gardens was often a pre-requisite for hand-outs of sugar, tea, flour and tobacco, but once ‘sit-down money’ became available in the 60’s the Aboriginal interest in gardening quite disappeared.

In reading up some of the background material for this occasion I was amused at a comment Bro. Garney Groves had written in his diary back in 1944 when he was working at Arltunga:

Bishop Gsell once told of how, in his own village, each house had a cow and each morning a shepherd would come along the street and the cows would leave their places and be taken to a common to graze. In the evening, they would return and each cow would leave the herd as it came to its own yard.

(Bro. Groves added on a new line in a grim inconsequential manner: ‘My first job was pulling down wurlies.’) He came from farming country near Goulburn in NSW. One can read between the lines: ‘It’s not the way we run dairy farms out in Goulburn!’ I don’t suppose in his wildest dreams Bishop Gsell thought he could reproduce the village style of Sainte-Croix-aux-Mines in the Northern Territory!

It should be remembered that Dom (later Bishop) Salvado of New Norcia in Western Australia had actually tried to share the nomadic life of the tribes. The Benedictines gained good working knowledge of the local languages, but little lasting effect otherwise, and the personal cost was too high. In 1851 Bishop Salvado wrote:

Thus the practical study of the language, laws, traditions and customs of the natives made us realise, among other things, that the very demanding wanderer’s life which we had first adopted was only of doubtful use. It called for the sacrifice of health and life on the part of the missionaries, with little to show for it at the end. On the other hand, the method of stability, that is, the founding of a mission, where hospitality could be given to all the natives who wanted to learn a trade or receive religious instruction, would yield good results, without exposing us to all the hardships of the nomadic life. (cf. Wilson 1988:7)

The mission policy adopted by the Benedictines resulted in founding the New Norcia monastery as a centre of Christian life and education. It is the way the Benedictines evangelised Europe after the barbarian invasions. People would be influenced towards Christianity to the extent that they came into New Norcia’s sphere of influence. A similar policy was followed in the north of Western Australia at Kalumburu.

Connection between Social Development and Evangelisation

Is it really the case that we cannot evangelise unless we ‘civilise’ first? The gospel was written in a Jewish context. One of the first movements in the early Christian church was to break the connection with Judaism. St Paul contended that to be a follower of Christ one did not need to adopt Jewish culture and ways of worship. The Christian eucharist quickly replaced the temple sacrifices. Some of us would think that we have not moved sufficiently away even yet from Jewish styles of prayer, the psalms and all that. At any rate, it is accepted that the gospel way is quite distinct from the Jewish cultural way. It is significant that in the Acts of the Apostles (9:2) the early Christian church was called ‘the Way’.

Is it bound up intrinsically with any spe-
cific cultural way? I think we would immediately rule out any candidate that might be suggested. To be Christian we don’t have to think and behave like Englishmen. Or like Italians, or Africans... or Chinese or Europeans, or whatever. Nowadays since the reforms of Vatican II we take it for granted that if we do belong to one or other of these cultures, we have the right and privilege of being Christians according to the manner of our cultural status.

Why then must the Aborigines abandon their native culture and way of living (I use ‘native’ in its original sense) and become a sort of black Englishmen or Frenchmen or—this is a difficult phrase—black white Australians, in order to enter the Christian church? Could not their Christian way of worship be integrated in principle with the *wonga* or the *lirga* just as fully as with the very staid and stationary Gregorian chant or plainsong? White Christians attending such an integrated Aboriginal mass might feel rather out of place—but no more, I presume, than an Aboriginal tribesman feels in the pews of a white parish church in town on Sunday.

It is not unexpected that the government would aim at assimilation for the sake of simple public order, but why did the early missionaries assume so easily that one must take on a ‘European’ style of life if one is to become Christian? No wonder our churches are pretty empty of Aborigines.

I liked a comment Pastor Paul Albrecht made to me in Alice Springs in 1975 while I was preparing for a missionary conference for all the MSCs to be held at Daly River later on that year. Pastor Albrecht saw the role of the church in that age of social change was to help clarify the issues for the Aboriginal people so as to enable them to make their own informed choice. If a man came to him and said that all he wanted from white society each year was a new shirt and trousers and sell it, buy his new shirt and trousers and go back home. If however he would like a radio cassette, a Toyota landcruiser, a TV set, a deep freeze and an array of similar things, then he had to realise and accept the implications of his choice: house, employment, hours of work, education, community habitation, life under social control and the rest of it.

*Appreciation of Aboriginal Culture*

When the first missionaries arrived in the Territory they must have come with a great batch of prejudicial notions about Aboriginal society, which had received a very negative press from explorers and anthropologists of the early evolutionist persuasion. They found much in Aboriginal culture not to their liking, but also a lot they came to admire. The Jesuits recorded particular appreciation of the Malak Malak language on the Daly:

> It is a beautiful language—or rather, contains the elements of a very perfect one. So philosophical is it, that it forces the conclusion that this despised race in times remote and in other lands was very much higher in the social scale than we now find it...Their language abounds in highly metaphysical distinctions unknown to ours. (cf. Wilson 1988:13)

Is it the case that evolutionist blinkers were preventing them from appreciating the reality before their very eyes?

Bishop Gsell was very critical of aspects of the Tiwi culture, particularly their treatment of young women. He showed a grudging admiration for their democratic social structure (Gsell 1956:28, 54). He saw them as so totally communistic that, tongue-in-cheek, he advised any serious student of communism to go and live with the Tiwi for a while—he was sure such a student would return totally cured of his illusions! (p.32) He showed in his book *The Bishop with 150 Wives* that he had paid a lot of attention to the Tiwi social system. In the epilogue Fr Dupeyrat quotes him thus:

> Fifty years ago, when I started my missionary life, anthropology was still in its infancy. If it
had been developed as it is in our days, it would have been very useful to me and would have helped me to avoid many mistakes. I had to establish contact with the natives, alone, slowly, prudently; I had to endeavour, to the best of my ability, to learn gradually their habits and customs so as to penetrate into their minds and hearts without hurt or shock. (Gsell 1956:173– 174)

All the same I wonder if many missionaries have had as much effect on the very social structure of their people as Bishop Gsell had on the Tiwi. Through the bravery and desperation of Martina, and his courageous and intelligent response to her plight—in the text box at the end of this article I provide a brief synopsis of the incident—he undermined the social structure of Tiwi society. He broke the power of the polygynous gerontocracy. Thereby he created two new social classes: the unmarried, unpromised, uncommitted girls and the free widows. He did not do it in one stroke, but that was the eventual result of the decision he made to buy Martina as a ‘wife’ in 1921. In principle the old men no longer had total control of the young women, nor of the widows, and thereby they lost one of the main levers of control that they had been able to exercise over the young men expecting early access to a wife, that is, a recent widow, while they were being forced to wait for the eventual maturation of their ‘promised’ one’s daughter.

I went off to AIATSIS recently to consult the anthropological records, expecting to be confronted with a host of objections by anthropologists to what this missionary had done. In an article in Hecate (1986:91) Tony Scanlon referred to ‘considerable opposition from anthropologists and other groups’. Scanlon’s own criticism was mainly of style: the dismissive way Gsell spoke about Aboriginal culture. He had better founded complaint when he considered the way other missionaries in the north had broken up existing polygynous marriages and redistributed the wives on the spot, thus causing a deal of confusion in the kinship system. The trouble for Gsell’s critics was that they tended to be applauding the incoming liberation of women in their own home societies, so could scarcely condemn the new freedom women were gaining among the Tiwi. If Fr Gsell had been going about his task in a rushed and violent manner, that could have been a basis for criticism. On the contrary Fr Gsell was praised by the leading anthropologist of the day, Professor Baldwin Spencer, for his careful approach. In his biography of Baldwin Spencer Professor Mulvaney writes (1985:301):

Gsell’s elementary yet tentative anthropological approach towards first comprehending Aboriginal culture and language, in order to transform it, gained Spencer’s grudging approval. His correspondence contains numerous references to the strength of Gsell’s character and his success, as compared with [others]…

More serious criticism came from within the mission itself for precisely the opposite reasons. His MSC companion, Fr Bill Henschke, was writing to the Australian Provincial superior 1920–21 in complaint about the lack of standard missionary activity. By that time there had been no adult baptisms, no attempt at adult instruction, the free distribution of food and tobacco without the demand for anything in return—in fact he believed the mission a total failure and he expected its imminent closure. (It is ironic that that was the very same time as Fr Gsell made his epoch-making purchase of Martina.) His own desire was to get as far away as possible, preferably to New Guinea. His letters make sad reading. He had been worked constantly for six years in the saw mill with no chance to do normal priestly ministry. His main comfort came from the care the OLSH Sisters showed for him. Reading Fr Henschke’s complaints and having heard in an interview many years later the comments of another of Bishop Gsell’s early priestly co-workers, Fr John McGrath msc, one has to acknowledge that Bishop/Fr Gsell was a hard task-master. In the event Fr Henschke was mercifully moved to Darwin in 1922, where he remained in dedicated service until his death fifty years later.

Nowadays we profit from the perceptive investigations of anthropologists like W E H
Stanner and have come to admire the poetic mysticism of Aboriginal religion. Aboriginal artists have introduced us somewhat into the richness of their vision of the world. We are bewitched by the Dreaming. We are learning to admire the intricacies and functionality of their kinship systems.

Social Development

While I have suggested criticism of the connection that early missionaries in the Territory perceived between Christianity and a settled agrarian way of life, I have to acknowledge that the Catholic view of mission as spelt out in the Papal missionary encyclicals of last century—well covered by Peter Hearn in his thesis (Hearn 2003:27–30)—outline a responsibility of the church to develop social systems that promote justice and proper human development for all peoples.

More importantly, Vatican Council documents envisaged a world wherein every human value that is good would be acknowledged as part of God’s creative plan and so become an operative part of the Kingdom of God on earth and in time. That is what the missionary is endeavouring to bring about! Nowadays in the Vatican II era the missionary goal is much bigger than the ‘saving of souls’, as it was when Fr Gsell and his companions first came out to this part of the world; it is even more than ‘planting the church’; it is saving the world itself, with all its particular cultures and peoples, men and women whether they be inside or outside the formal structures of church membership. As St Paul saw, it is redeeming creation itself and restoring everything in Christ.

Overview

This brings me back to my beginning, the Teilhardian view. Over the ages one can discern an expansion of human culture in awareness, language, information technology, music, art, mechanical technology, medicine, food production…in spite of all the negatives of war, cruelty, inhumanity, social injustice, persecution, ethnic cleansing and the rest. Parallel with it, intrinsically connected with it at times, subtly informing, reforming and purifying it, is the other great force stemming from the life, death and resurrection of Christ the Lord. Reflecting on this century of missionary endeavour makes us aware of the great saga we are involved in.

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In conclusion I would like to make two points:

Firstly, Nungalinya College where we are meeting today is both a symbol and an instrument in a most important relatively recent missiological advance in the diocese of Darwin. An Aboriginal Christian ministry is being formed: surely it is only Aboriginal ministers who can guide and nourish the completion of the missionary process amongst their own communities.

And this great work of ministerial formation is being performed by three of the major branches of the Christian church working in formal union. It augurs well for the future. The Nungalinya commitment is surely one of the high points of Bishop Ted Collins’ episcopacy.

Secondly, we should remind ourselves of the challenge with which Pope John Paul II confronted us and the Aboriginal people of Australia at Alice Springs back in 1986 when he addressed them at Blatherskite Park:

You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.
A brief summary might be helpful. Gsell describes the pivotal incident in Chapter V, simply entitled ‘Martina’. She was ‘an intelligent, lively little girl’. Like some other little Tiwi girls, she stayed with the Sisters for schooling, but back in 1921 was not yet baptised. An old man came out of the bush one day and claimed her as his ‘promised’ wife. With sorrow, Fr Gsell had to say farewell to her: they were all bound by the tribal law. Martina begged to be allowed stay, but she was led off in tears. She did not settle down and was punished with a spear-thrust into her leg. As soon as she could, she fled back some 40 miles to the mission. When her husband and his companions came with their spears ready to take her back, with a fight if need be, Gsell managed to delay them. Over night he got the idea of buying her from her husband and his tribe. Tiwi were quite happy to sell their women for a few days to visiting pearl divers and such like, but to sell her forever was not an action sanctioned by tradition! Gsell laid out a most enticing array of goods like axes, knives, flour, tobacco and pipe. After long discussion the Tiwi men decided that they could sell Martina as his wife, provided he kept her as such. So Fr Gsell gained an official Tiwi wife. He said he never agreed to the codicil that he would not pass her on to another. In due course she found a young baptised Tiwi man whom she was happy to marry. They had five children. When her daughter, Elizabeth, was claimed as ‘promised’ wife, Gsell came to realise that in buying a wife he also had to add ownership of his ‘wife’s’ female offspring into the bargain: he had to buy off the prospective son-in-law as well. When Gsell was made bishop, he was proud of the soubriquet ‘Bishop with 150 wives’. Sadly, Martina contracted leprosy later on in life and died at the Channel Island leprosarium.

REFERENCES


COMMENTS ON THE GSELL LECTURE

1. DAWN CORDONA

When reading the book Bishop Gsell and 150 Wives I came across the page where a white man on Melville Island managed to divert Father Gsell’s attention for a mission site in 1911 from Melville to Bathurst Island. That person was my great grandfather Robert Joel Cooper. So in giving comment today, my family had a part in the story of Gsell.

On completion of reading the paper that was presented today I had very mixed feelings. Sad, hurt and confused all at once. The past was haunting in my thinking towards indigenous culture and society. And yet if it was not for the past we would not be here today. I pondered the questions: Given today society recognizes the value of indigenous culture, would Bishop Gsell have done things differently? Would he have taken the time to find the similarities between indigenous culture and evangelism? Would he have used what already existed in indigenous culture—the things in indigenous culture that are close to christianity as a springboard for his evangelism? I ponder.

So much has been achieved over the years in missionary work with indigenous people and over time a close relationship has developed. Knowing that good things have occurred I put the past behind and look at all the wonderful things that are happening now and in the future.

Christian people have contributed immensely to indigenous society. In times of struggle with government policies in the past and present, Christians have given support to the indigenous people. If it were not for the Christians in the time of the assimilation policy, indigenous society would not exist today.

And it is today where the richness of this relationship exists. On Saturday the College staff participated in a ceremony held at Bathurst Island for the Centenary of Gsell and the graduation of our students.

The coming together of Christianity and Indigenous Society was clearly evident in the service. Two cultures coming together in Christ.

On completion of the service, the women of the choir came to me and said, This is all because of Nungalinya. I was deeply touched by this. So touched I feel the need to tell you the Nungalinya story. A story of Christians and Indigenous people working and living together.

In 1965 training for indigenous lay ministry was being held around Darwin in houses. The UCA (MOM) and Anglican Churches came together and established Nungalinya. Nungalinya a Larrakia word meaning Old Man Rock. Larrakia gave their permission for a theological college to be placed upon their land. Nungalinya has grown from this time to be a National Indigenous Ecumenical College supported by our churches.

It is a place where indigenous people from all over Australia can come and talk to God. It is their Mother. It is a place where the indigenous people come to learn the Bible and other skills and knowledge that help develop their communities. The College is a prime example of a strong relationship of Christian and Indigenous people and a place where reconciliation is at its best.

On 29 November 1986 in Alice Springs, Pope John Paul II delivered an address to Aboriginal People:
The Church invites you to express the living word of Jesus in ways that speak to your Aboriginal minds and hearts. All over the world people worship God and read his word in their own language, and colour the great signs and symbols of religion with touches of their own traditions. Why should you be different from them in this regard, why should you not be allowed the happiness of being with God and each other in Aboriginal fashion?

John Wilcken in his paper ‘Aboriginal Religious Traditions and the Sacramental life of the Church’ asks the question how Aboriginal religious ceremonies—sacramental life—how this tradition of sacramental life may make a contribution to the Australian church—a contribution which one hopes, may be joyfully received as addressed by Pope John Paul II.

I ask you all to deeply consider or reconsider the address of Pope John Paul II and in doing so, I ask you all to not walk in front of us in our spiritual journeys and spiritual development but to walk beside us as brothers and sisters in Christ. And in our journey of learning I ask our churches to further enrich our relationship, and ask are you prepared to allow us to develop and lead Christian Ministry our way? Thank you.

2. LORRAINE ERLANDSON

I GIVE THANKS firstly to God for all the Religious and Lay Missionaries of the past and present.

I am a Territorian and person of Aboriginal descent and I have received the faith through the labours of the early missionaries down in Central Australia which enabled my mother and grandmother to receive the Catholic faith.

It is difficult to say all I would like to say in the short time I have been given to respond so I need to get straight to the point.

One of the things that has completely confused me with the Church has been the connection of Christianity to Dreamtime. So, your comment Fr. Martin that nowadays we profit from the perceptive investigations of anthropologists and that we are bewitched by the Dreaming is what grabbed my attention in your paper.

It would appear from Pope John Paul II’s address to the Indigenous Australians in Alice Springs in 1986 that this was an affirmation of the Dreaming. Have the anthropologists lead the Church into affirming a set of beliefs quite different from Christianity and to uniting the two as one? Does this help us come to know the truth about Jesus?

Some indigenous Christians with connection to Dreamtime beliefs, law and culture with the help of non-indigenous religious appear to have accepted to unite the two beliefs, whilst others choose to reject one or the other. Many indigenous Christians who have lost connection to Traditional Aboriginal beliefs and culture are trying to connect to the culture and at
the same time are not very well instructed in the Christian faith and it becomes obvious that there exists confusion in how to live these beliefs out.

I believe the Church in doing this has undone some of the work of the early missionaries in bringing people into a relationship with Jesus by practically saying you can belong to the Church and retain your Traditional Aboriginal beliefs and this in effect has almost made Jesus irrelevant and this has been reflected in some of the views and practices of some of both my indigenous brothers and sisters and non-indigenous religious that I have encountered within the Church and I’ll share on some of these shortly.

The early missionaries believed there was a difference between Aboriginal Religion and Christianity and some regard this to have been uninformed judgements. However their views would certainly have been influenced by Jesus’ words himself (Mark 16:15) when he told his disciples to “Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to all people.” Did Jesus make a mistake? Why would he tell his disciples to go to the ends of the earth if those at the ends of the earth already knew the truth?

Both Aboriginal Religion and Christianity contain a set of beliefs which govern the way of the life of the believers. As these beliefs have been united and are worked out in the Christian faith and worship there appears to me to be a need for guidance and direction from the Church Religious leaders to the indigenous people.

You would all be aware of the differences in the beliefs:

Dreaming beliefs offer eternal life here on earth. Each indigenous person’s place is secured through their place of birth. This belief convinces people that their place of belonging is to the land.

Christianity offers eternal life with the Creator whose Kingdom we are told by Jesus (John 18:36) ‘…does not belong to this world…’ Each person’s place is prepared and awaits them because of their faith in Jesus. In John 17:16 Jesus says ‘Just as I do not belong to the world, they do not belong to the world.’

The Dreaming spirituality is a connectedness to the spirit/s which dwells in the land where the spirits of the ancestors are forever present in some form in nature. There appears to be some differences of interpretation of these beliefs and some believe it to be a connection to the spirits of the ancestors.

Christianity offers a spirituality of connecting to the unseen Creator through the Son through whom the Holy Spirit is given to dwell in the hearts of the believers.

Some indigenous people keep saying we have a deep and rich spirituality. Didn’t Jesus say blessed are the poor in spirit? Does one belief give a sense of security that you have the past, the present and the future all before your eyes in the things of creation? Doesn’t our Christian spirituality bring us into recognition of our need and total trust in Jesus to bring us into the unseen kingdom which awaits us?

Is it a part of Christianity for a follower of Jesus to address their prayers to the spirits of the ancestors?

Is the intention of the smoking ceremony used in Christian worship supposed to be connected to leaving people with a sense of being cleansed and forgiven? That was one non-indigenous man’s response after having experienced a smoking ceremony at an Aboriginal Catholic Ministry.

Is it Christian to pray for healing with spirit guides?
These things happen and it seems people don’t know any different.

I can see parallels between what has happened within the Church with indigenous peoples and some of the encounters Jesus had with people.

In John 4:22 Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman. This woman and her people believed they knew God and that they were worshipping him. Jesus said to her: ‘You Samaritans do not really know whom you worship; because it is from the Jews that salvation comes.’

Jesus’ own people rejected Him and believed that they knew God and yet they did not accept that Jesus was the way, the truth and the life.

When Indigenous Christians claimed we already knew God and had a connection and relationship with the Spirit of God through the Dreaming are we not rejecting Jesus as the one who brings us into relationship with the Father and opens the way to eternal life with the Creator?

Some of my perceptions are that some people have almost excluded Jesus in the connecting of the beliefs and overlook the fact that as Christians the relationship is with Jesus and that he is the one we are following.

A Catholic nun presented a paper at a conference I attended last year. She seemed to be of the opinion that as Church we didn’t need to give indigenous Australians theology courses or do anything for them except leave them alone because they have it all in what they have. She was also of the opinion that whether indigenous people lived in remote or urban towns and cities they were true to their culture and never changed. She had in the past lived in a remote community in the Northern Territory.

Indigenous and non-indigenous people have portrayed our people as having the ideal culture and perfect connection to the Spirit of God through the Dreaming. One indigenous Christian’s account is that we lived in perfect harmony with God and one another and had no sin.

A leader in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal down south told me that he offered to do a school of evangelization with the Aboriginal Catholic Community. The reply was no, we have the message stick. The Word of God was rejected in favour of the message stick. Indigenous people will all gather in Alice Springs in October for the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council Assembly and it will be interesting to see whether the messages conveyed on the message sticks from all around Australia come from the gospel or are messages about culture. How culturally appropriate is the message stick today when everyone is walking around with mobile phones texting one another?

There are many aspects of culture that are contrary to Christian beliefs, e.g. sorcery, cursing and pay-back are still alive and active in our communities.

The Church today appears to remain silent on some of the negative aspects of culture that the early missionaries addressed. People need to be instructed on what is accepted and what needs to be renounced and then it is their free choice to accept or reject Christianity. It hurts the whole body if some are engaging in practices which some in the Church perceive to be harmful and draws criticism from outsiders as to what we as a Church are all about.

We touch the surface level of external cultural practices within the Church. Some are concerned about whether the chalice and paten are culturally appropriate whilst at the same time some indigenous people refuse to receive Communion from particular Eucharistic Ministers for cultural reasons and some would not be able to help particular relatives that might be hurt lying by the roadside due to their cultural beliefs.

Enculturation was introduced to help make the worship more meaningful to the people of the culture. However, this seemed to come at a time when the peoples of the culture had already been introduced to and influenced by the dominant Australian culture. Cultures do
change. There exists a great diversity amongst
the indigenous people of Australia. What may
be the lived experience of some who have con-
nnection to Traditional Aboriginal culture and
ceremony may not be the lived experience of
others. Many are concerned about whether
cultural expressions are evident within our
indigenous Church worship but at the same
time outside the Church in secular life for many
we are disconnected to the traditional Aborigi-
nal culture but borrow aspects of the culture
to make the worship more cultural.

We are happy to see language, art, song
and dance included in the liturgy. It is great,
but, what about the brokenness, pain and suf-
ferring in families and communities. Often the
result of the culture we live in and although
this may have some roots from the impact of
our history we need to accept our personal sin-
fulness which causes pain and suffering to
ourselves, our families and communities.

I asked some students what was in their
culture today and they said suicides was a part
of their culture. One indigenous Catholic
woman related that her husband wanted to
bring a second wife into the marriage.

After Vatican II in trying to rectify mis-
takes of the past in relation to culture we ap-
pear to want to leave people in the comfort of
their culture and the gospel is not challenging
things in the culture because as Church we
seem to have the attitude that all is good in the
culture. The pendulum has swung so far in the
opposite direction from where it was with the
early missionaries and it needs to find a point
of balance or the Church buildings in some
places will become venues for promoting cul-
ture while the faith aspect takes a back seat.

Our early missionaries copped a lot of criti-
cism especially from outside the Church. They
were not perfect. None of us are. Some peo-
ple left the Church with bitterness and anger
because of their experiences. But, because of
these missionaries some of our indigenous
people still remain connected to the Church
and have a deep love for Jesus and the Church.
Through them we received the faith. We need
to ensure that it is the faith we continue to give
and not just expect to see aspects of culture in
the Church worship but people living the faith
in the culture, and to live the faith we need to
know what that faith is.

Just going to Mass each Sunday and a lit-
tle catechetical instruction in preparation for
the Sacraments isn’t going to keep us grow-
ning and deepening in our knowledge and un-
derstanding of Jesus. As Religious you re-
ceive ongoing training and education to keep
you growing. Our indigenous adults need to
have ongoing Christian education and train-
ing too.

It seems to me like the Church has almost
done the reversal of what happened in the be-
ginning with the early missionaries and are
saying to the indigenous people, what we took
away from you and interrupted in your beliefs
and culture, take it all back and you can have
Christianity as well. In doing this we have in a
kind of way become the spoilit ones who can
have it all. But in having it all we are not go-
ing to grow or know who we are following if
the faith aspect is neglected in being provided
as ongoing development for our indigenous
people.

_We have not always been able to change people or to change situa-
tions—but we have been able to be with people as they struggle to
change and to improve their situation. We have not always been able
to alleviate a reality of suffering or oppression but we have been able
to share and to live that suffering or that oppression along with our
brothers and sisters._

—Fr Mark McDonald MSC, Superior General, at the Gsell Centenary
Celebration, August 13, 2006.
THANK YOU FOR the opportunity to respond to Martin’s paper. I acknowledge the traditional owners, the Larrakia people, on whose land we stand. I acknowledge and thank Nungalinya College for hosting this seminar and I pay tribute to all who have gone before us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, our ancestors in faith and culture who have brought us to this point.

Speaking of those who have gone before us I was struck by a couple of remarks in Bishop Gsell’s own book *The Bishop with One Hundred and Fifty Wives*:

> It was good fortune that the Jesuit Fathers had been here before me; they had established mission stations in places they considered attractive …This lesson was not lost on me (p.40).

> And in deciding whether to make his base on the mainland or on an island Gsell further comments: ‘Once again…the Jesuits were my guides’ (p.40).

Such wisdom! Can we not agree that Gsell got all his good ideas, and none of his bad ones, from the Jesuits?

A useful question is to ask what issues of contemporary relevance are raised in Martin’s paper with regard to Gsell’s missiology. There are three which are as relevant today as they were a century ago which can be pondered by all of us—priest, religious, lay; teacher, pastor or service provider; Indigenous and non-Indigenous working with Indigenous people. The issues may be summarized as confidence, confusion and connection.

Firstly confidence. As Martin’s paper makes clear Gsell and those who followed him were confident about a number of things:

- They had confidence in what they had to bring, namely a combination of European culture infused with Christian faith.
- They had confidence in the value of settled agrarian life for Indigenous people.
- They had confidence in their methods of evangelization.
- They had confidence in the value of integration or assimilation with non-Indigenous society.

So, what are we, a century later, confident about? What do we believe in, what is our vision? For myself, for starters, I believe in the value of communities based on a shared faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am not confident about much else. Which brings us to the second issue which is suggested by Martin’s paper: confusions or lack of confidence.

There are hints that Gsell and others were not sure about the place of Indigenous culture in the scheme of things. In this context I note his reflection in later life that if more had been known about anthropology he might have avoided mistakes. So faith and culture or gospel and culture. Given the wide range of responses to this issue I suspect that there is little more certainty or clarity in our day than there was one hundred years ago, advances in anthropology notwithstanding.

An illustration stands out in my mind. At a Sunday evening service which I attended in the grounds of this college some years ago there were two Indigenous speakers who expressed almost opposite points of view. One, the late Harry Huddleston, said that now that Indigenous people were Christian they must abandon traditional beliefs and practices. The other speaker urged people to remain strong in their culture as well as Christian faith.

For me this issue is a matter of accompaniment of Indigenous people in the expression of faith. Those expressions may vary from place to place and are never definitively settled.

A third issue which Martin’s paper raises or at least hints at, is the issue of connection, meaning the value of honouring relationships. If there is an aspect of Aboriginal culture which is alive and similar everywhere—at Nguiu a century ago, at Nguiu now, in Alice Springs, Townsville and Mount Druitt, it is the central...
place of relationships or simply relatedness in general. I was reminded of this at the football on Saturday night when a Tiwi woman whom I had not seen for over ten years, pointed out to those around her that I was her brother in the Tiwi scheme of things.

I am suggesting that Gsell, and many priests, religious and lay people of his era, honoured this aspect of culture, perhaps inadvertently. Martin notes Gsell’s patience in making contact with Tiwi people before doing anything else and he lived on Bathurst Island for twenty-seven years. Others gave similarly lengthy commitment and remained connected. I wonder, in this day of contract and consultancy, whether we are able or inclined to honour the value that Tiwi and other Indigenous people place on the relationships they invite us into.

4. PETER HEARN MSC

My Reflections look backwards at what has been rather than what might be, or what is, let alone make predictions about the future. It’s a long time since I was involved directly in Aboriginal communities.

I will begin with the two concluding points raised by Fr Martin Wilson in his talk: Firstly, Nungalinya College and its place in the training of Aboriginal people for ministry.

Bishop John O’Loughlin, in notes on mission policy for the Daly River Mission in the mid-1950s, listed under the heading evangelisation: ‘establish Church: priests, sisters, brothers, catechists…’—the basics required for leadership of a local Church in the ecclesiology of the time. From the first missionary encyclicals early in the 20th Century, Popes had pointed out the fundamental importance of developing local leadership for local churches, especially in the event of decolonisation.

In 1955 Daly River Mission was just beginning, and it’s future was not assured, as the words of Bishop O’Loughlin at its opening convey: ‘We have established a centre both cultural and spiritual around which may rally the remnants of once powerful tribes…the Mulluk-Mulluk, Brinken, Nangiomeri and Moil, who seemed doomed to extinction.’ With the coming of the mission the hope was that ‘they may now look more confidently to the future.’ [Hearn P.23, 24] It took some vision on the part of Bishop O’Loughlin to see a future Church resourced with ministers from among its own people, when the circumstances of many Aboriginal people, and not just those at the Daly, appeared so bleak.

Nungalinya College is clearly an important place if that vision of a local church leadership is to be realised. Catholic involvement with Nungalinya began when Martin Wilson offered courses here toward the end of Bishop O’Loughlin’s episcopacy.

Martin’s other concluding point, concerned the place of Aboriginal culture in a truly Catholic Catholicism which Pope John Paul II spoke of at Alice Springs twenty years ago.
In the context of Aboriginal culture and Church, I found myself thinking of a very special place, the Daly River Aboriginal Pastoral Training Centre. This was central to the Dreaming of Fr John Leary MSC and Sr Mary McGowen OLSH. It was coupled with Fr Martin Wilson’s Nelen Yubu Missiological Institute, also at Daly River. The dream began at a conference of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at Daly River in 1975.

Like Nungalinya College, Daly River Centre was a place where Aboriginal people, in the beauty of the River setting, in close proximity to the bush, could reflect, think, pray. There the extraordinarily rich symbolic fields of ‘The Dreaming’ and Catholicism, their narratives, sacramentality, dance, art and doctrine, showed great possibility of mutual enrichment. The agenda of inculturation called for in Pope Paul VI’s 1975 encyclical Announcing the Good News, (Evangelii Nuntiandi), seemed a possibility.

Fr Leary drew partly on the South American Liberation Theologians. The approach moved from reflection on the realities of life in Aboriginal communities, to action based on firm cultural and Biblical/Catholic foundations, leading to further reflection and so on. He wrote: ‘The need is for leaders to help their people live as Aborigines with self-confidence and dignity, in their style, at their pace, making their own peculiar and worthwhile contribution to the world of today.’ [Hearn 241] The late 1970s were a worrying time for all in the Aboriginal communities, a time of social malaise that became entrenched. However, it was, concurrently, a time when Aboriginal people began to reassert their own cultural identity, in the wake, among other things, of the Land Rights Legislation in the NT.

Fr Leary spoke of ‘authentic development’ for Aboriginal communities: It ‘must be in genuine harmony’ he wrote, ‘with the culture of the person as it exists at this particular time. That is, it must not be super-imposed; rather it must be rooted in, based on, motivated out of the person.’ He went on to state, ‘Only the people who are part of the culture can, through self-examination and action and continued reflection on the action, vouch for this authenticity…Self-determination without self-examination is self-extinction.’ [Hearn 257]

The other ‘wing’ of this Daly River endeavour was the Nelen Yubu Institute, The Good Way. Martin Wilson, its inspirer, imagined it to be ‘a mediating centre between anthropological research and missiological theory on the one hand, and practical religion and social work in the field on the other.’ He wanted to draw on the insights of anthropologists, missiologists, the experiences of missionaries and, especially, the experience of Aboriginal people themselves. Then Aboriginal people ‘could illuminate, reinforce, expand, qualify, question or negate items of anthropological and missiological observation and theory.’ [Hearn 244]

Rarely had the Catholic Church in the NT, in my mind, been in such a good place to explore the Incarnational/Sacramental richness of the Catholic tradition in relationship with The Dreaming in its contemporary expression, and to develop local community leaders.

The relatively brief flowering of the Daly River Centre was a loss from which we never really recovered, I feel. As is often the case, it is those ‘outside’ the circle of the campfire who may see more clearly the light it affords. This is what one ‘outsider’, from the Broome Diocese, wrote of their experience at the Daly River Centre:

Sometimes in particular places there seems reason for unalloyed hope. Such is to be seen in the continuing enthusiasm of groups from the Broome diocese who have benefited from the Daly River...
program under the guidance of Fr John Leary and Sister Mary McGowan. This is a program of spiritual self-discovery and leadership, an integral part of which would surely be the recognition of God’s grace…illuminating all that is good in a culture, all that expresses genuine self-transcendence, and that points to the Other which is nevertheless very close and redeeming in the person of Christ.1

Paul VI’s Encyclical, Announcing the Good News (n.20) stated that ‘The split between the Gospel and cultures is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times.’ When Fr Gsell arrived on Bathurst Island, the model of mission he operated out of, the Ethnocentric Model, largely institutionalised that ‘split’ between culture and the Church. Ethnocentrism is ‘the tendency …to regard the ways and values of one’s own society as the normal, right, proper, and certainly the best way of thinking, feeling, speaking and doing things, whether it be in regard to eating, sleeping, dressing…marrying, burying the dead, or speaking with God.’2

In the pre-Vatican II missionary period, Bishop O’Loughlin, successor to Bishop Gsell, stated at the Missions/Administration Conference in 1953 that the missionary task was ‘to substitute a new religion for the old one.’ [Missions/Administration Conference, 1953, p.26. Hearn 78] The ‘problem’ in the eyes of Catholic (and Protestant) missionaries, was that they regarded Aboriginal religion largely ‘as a conglomeration of magic and superstition…’ [M/AC 1957, p.3. Hearn 70] Magic and superstition could have no place in true religion.

Now compare that summary of Aboriginal religion with this one from the well-regarded anthropologist Professor Stanner. Stanner wrote: Many customs, in themselves not only innocent of evil or repugnant elements but, in fact, of a sacramental order, were also suppressed by missionaries…it was a blindness of the mind’s eye, not just poor observation or lack of information, that made the ritual uses of water, blood, earth and other substances, in combination with words, gestures, chants, songs, and dances, all having for the Aborigines a compelling authority, appear to Europeans mere barbarisms without sacramental quality. One doubts if anywhere could be found more vivid illustrations of a belief in spiritual power laying hold of material things and ennobling them under a timeless purpose in which men feel they have a place.3

The problem was that until Vatican II with its openness to other cultures and a developing awareness of the action of the Holy Spirit in all people, the prevailing theology and ecclesiology afforded no middle ground for the ‘Two Ways’ of Catholicism and traditional Aboriginal religion to meet. Missionaries, because of the perception that Aboriginal religion could be summed up as ‘a conglomeration of magic and superstition’ were unable, in the words of Bernard Lonergan, to ‘proceed from within [Aboriginal] culture and…seek ways and means for making it into a vehicle for communicating the Christian message.’4

At the funeral Mass of Bishop O’Loughlin in 1985, the Tiwi singers began the traditional chant from the old Latin Mass for the Dead, the Dies Irae. It was unscripted, not in the official booklet. The assembled bishops and clergy and religious took up the singing with them. It is a long chant, and one by one the bishops and others began to drop out of the singing as memories failed. But not the Tiwis—they sang it to the very end. It makes one think. Becoming Catholic in this early period meant stepping away from the central ceremonials of Aboriginal religion and entering the new religion through the medium of a Latin liturgy and Marian and other devotions. This was undoubtedly assimilationist, quite ‘foreign’, yet possessed of powerful aspects of symbol, ritual, doctrine and community, and the life of grace. Yet, despite the ‘foreignness’, during the foundation period of the missions, faith was deeply implanted in the context of the Latin Rite Church. In the early missionary period, in many instances, Aboriginal people, including adults, responded strongly to the Catholicism presented by the missionaries.

Evangelisation, of course, was not done in a vacuum. Missionaries had to help a nomadic people learn the skills of settled life. Further, the Aboriginal people contacted by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart more often than not were
in poor health, often landless and disoriented. Bishop O’Loughlin referred to this aspect of missionary work as ‘integration’. ‘Integration’ referred to the need to find ‘meaningful work’ for the people and to support the poorly resourced mission stations. Work was an absolute necessity as the missions depended for their very survival on local gardens, poultry, goats, cattle, fishing and so on. Other work skills for settled life, such as the building trades, health care workers and teachers, needed to be developed in each community.

When I first went to Port Keats in 1979 local Aboriginal men were proud to tell me that they made the blocks and bricks, lumbered the wood and built the local hospital under the supervision of MSC Brothers and lay missionaries. I also remember my total surprise when I visited Bathurst Island and went into the Bima Wear Factory. The clothing was made by a couple of dozen well-trained Aboriginal women seamstresses under the direction of OLSH Sisters. The men did the screen printing of the fabrics.

These two examples remind us of the enormous effort, sustained over a long period of time, that went in to the transferral of skills to local Aboriginal people by missionaries. It is a story that is yet to be adequately told. The sadness, it seems to me, is that in these post-mission days, that bank of skills appears to have largely been lost.

While assimilationist terms like ‘integrate’ and ‘civilise’ were used as policy labels for missions, in reality Catholic Missions were places where Aboriginal culture survived, despite some aspects of it being discouraged. Some essential elements, such as access to clan lands, the kinship and totemic systems, mythologies and languages, found a continuing place on the missions. Anecdotal evidence suggests that tribal elders were known, consulted, appealed to, and respected by missionaries. Further, although the nomadic life-style came to be abandoned, missionaries encouraged the traditional skills such as hunting—in the course of time with rifles and fishing lines—and gathering, and the passing on to the next generation of the extraordinary knowledge of the flora and fauna of the bush possessed by Aborigines. Together with these cultural forms, traditional art was developed under the influence of missionaries and corroborees of traditional music and movement were enduring features of mission life.

A basic requirement for Aboriginal culture to survive is access to ancestral lands.

A fact, in the main unknown, about Fr Gsell is that when he first went to Bathurst Island the Tiwi Islands had been divided into pastoral leases. At the time, only two had been applied for. Fr Gsell single-handedly badgered the Commonwealth Government in Canberra to have all pastoral leases removed, and the Tiwi Islands made into Reserved Lands solely for the Aboriginal people. This was also in line with mission experience from the time of the Jesuits in Palmerston and Daly River in the 1880s, which sought remoteness from the corrupting influences of the dominant culture. [Gsell, _150 Wives_, p.42f. Hearn 90]

Fr Docherty, the founder of Port Keats Mission in 1936, is credited by the Aboriginal people of Peppimenarti with having the lands they now occupy added to the Daly River Reserve once a pastoral lease had expired. [Hearn 217]

In Alice Springs, MSCs were instrumental in obtaining a land grant of 425 acres at Charles Creek for the Aboriginal people dispossessed in the Centre. That mission was moved during the war to Arltunga and finally to its present location in Santa Teresa in 1953. Likewise at Daly River, MSCs obtained land for the mission that remains in the possession of local Aboriginal people.

Finally, it may surprise people to learn that from their inception, MSC—OLSH Missions were not intended to become places where large populations resided, let alone grow into towns. At the opening of the Daly River Mission in 1955, Bishop O’Loughlin spelt out the policy for all missions:

The policy of the Mission is to provide schooling for the children—medical care for the sick and ailing, and for mothers and babies especially…We do not intend to gather permanently on the station
a large section of the adult population. These will continue to obtain gainful employment on the farms and cattle stations. [Hearn 23]

Only those adults were to reside on the mission station who were necessary to build and maintain the infrastructure needed for the mission to fulfil its primary purposes of education, health care, and training of young adults for work in the wider economy. It was a limited notion of mission.

However, circumstances beyond the control of the missionaries meant that the limited missionary enterprise blew out to become an all-encompassing mission. For example, at Daly River in 1958, only three years after the Mission opened, huge floods destroyed the farming industry along the Daly River and inundated the mission. The farms never recovered and the Aboriginal people lost their jobs. They looked to the mission for survival. The mission had a pre-flood population of 62, including 50 school children. Post flood, they had to house and find work for a fluctuating population of up to 400-500 in time, with 168 adults and 130 school children in residence immediately after the flood. Overnight the Mission station became a permanent township with all its complicated needs—something never envisaged in policy. [Hearn 110]

A seven-year drought in the 1960s in the Centre of Australia meant that Aboriginal people employed on cattle stations were put off in great numbers. An article in the Centralian Advocate reads: ‘Facing starvation, the natives have trekked across scorched country to the [Santa Teresa] Mission’ [Hearn 108]. Santa Teresa Mission was forever changed as the numbers seeking refuge in it overwhelmed the station. It, too, became, almost overnight, a mission of around 400 to 500 people—a small town in effect, in which the missionaries had to try and find ‘meaningful work’ for them.

The story of the build up of populations in all missions put enormous pressure on not just the missionaries, but also the people. It presented them with realities largely not foreseen.

A constant theme in missionary correspondence and meetings over the decades was the effort, nonetheless, to create local leadership and an environment in which people could thrive, ‘at their pace, in their own way’ as Fr Leary often wrote.

It is an effort that is still being taken up, thankfully, through places like Nungalinya College.

REFERENCES


THE ALICE SPRINGS ADDRESS AND THE CONCEPT OF NATION

JOHN WILCKEN SJ

The title of this paper may seem surprising, given that the word ‘nation’ does not occur in Pope John Paul’s address to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, on 29 November 1986. The Pope’s emphasis was on other significant themes, such as respect for Indigenous cultural and religious traditions, the tragic history of the original inhabitants of this land since 1788, and the importance of developing a genuinely Aboriginal Christianity. Nevertheless the concept of nation was hovering in the background, and it is important that, at some stage, attention be focussed on this fundamental concept. It is the aim of this present paper to do this, although in a quite introductory way.

Paul VI in 1970

Pope John Paul quotes from the address of Pope Paul VI to the Aboriginal people of Australia, which he gave in Sydney on 2nd December 1970. Brief as it was, this statement was of considerable significance. It addressed its hearers as ‘the descendants of Australia’s first inhabitants’, affirmed the value of their lifestyle and culture and proclaimed that Aboriginal people ‘have all human and civic rights’, as well as ‘certain duties and obligations’. The Pope spoke of the enrichment of Australian society by Aboriginal culture, and said: ‘We deeply respect your dignity and reiterate our deep affection for you’ (Paul VI, 1970, 69). These are all positive features of the address.

Understandably—given the date of 1970, and also the brevity of the message—there were also limitations. Here I wish to make two points. First, the Pope says to his Indigenous hearers: ‘… you, like all other ethnic minorities…’ One would now want to make a clear distinction between the original inhabitants of this land and ‘other ethnic minorities’, i.e. presumably groups of non-Anglo-Celts, or perhaps, of non-Europeans).

The second point is more subtle, but significant. The Pope declares:

The Church proclaims that you, like all other ethnic minorities, have all human and civic rights—in every way the equal of those in the majority.

This statement is both important and—up to a point—unexceptionable. It is rightly affirming of Aboriginal people. However, apart from the problem that they are equated with ‘other ethnic minorities’, there is the difficulty that the statement seems to presuppose the structural status quo of Australian society. If the ‘human and civic rights’ are simply ‘the equal of those in the majority’, then no really fundamental change to the way things are in Australia seems to be contemplated. Yet it can be argued that for Indigenous people to have ‘all human and civic rights’, fundamental change is required.

The same presupposition seems to be implied in a statement a little later in the message: ‘society itself is enriched by the presence of different cultural and ethnic elements’. Presumably the word ‘society’ here means Australia as presently constituted, i.e. the sta-
This second point may seem carping criticism, but I hope its significance will emerge as this paper proceeds. Meanwhile I want to reiterate that Pope Paul’s message was a powerful and inspiring one for its time.

**John Paul II in 1986**

Pope John Paul begins his speech in Alice Springs by addressing himself to ‘the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders of Australia’ (John Paul II, 1986, 93). Thereafter he simply uses the word ‘Aboriginal’, but one can presume that it is meant to include Torres Strait Islanders as well. Then, in his own text, he does not use the word ‘ethnic’, or speak of Aboriginal or Islander people as another ethnic group. (The word ‘ethnic’ does occur in a quote from Paul VI.) The long introductory section on the first inhabitants of Australia makes it clear that he sees their descendants as forming a very special group, with unique rights to the land.

Although the Mabo decision of the High Court was not given till nearly six years later, the Pope speaks of “the legal fiction adopted by European settlers that this land was *terra nullius*—nobody’s country” (John Paul II, 1986, 97). He goes on to say:

> Let it not be said that the fair and equitable recognition of Aboriginal rights to land is discrimination. To call for the acknowledgement of the land rights of people who have never surrendered those rights is not discrimination (p. 98).

Thus the pope is stating that Aboriginal people already occupied, and were in possession of, the land before the Europeans arrived, and that they have never surrendered their rights. He is appropriately cautious, however, about the way forward:

> Certainly what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow.

Immense damage has been done to the Aboriginal societies (nations?) which existed before the Europeans came, and obviously no simple return to the pre-1788 situation is possible. As to what can be done, the Pope speaks in general terms, but nevertheless he conveys an important message:

> The establishment of a new society for Aboriginal people cannot go forward without just and mutually recognised agreements with regard to these human problems, even though their causes lie in the past.

The underlying question here is: who are the partners that will be involved in establishing these ‘just and mutually recognised agreements’? Presumably one partner will be the Commonwealth Government of Australia (or perhaps each state government). But the critical question is: who will be the other partner (or partners)? One must keep in mind the Pope’s assertion that the Aboriginal people ‘have never surrendered’ their rights to the land. These rights, or course, pre-date any British legal rights of ownership, and are more fundamental than property rights established under British or non-Indigenous Australian law. Here we are faced with the still-unfinished business of the relationship between the settlers who arrived in 1788 and the original inhabitants of the land. Presumably the other partner in the process of establishing ‘just and mutually recognised agreements’ must be the Aboriginal people and the Torres Strait Islanders.

**What Is a Nation?**

Henry Reynolds, in his 1996 book, *Aboriginal Sovereignty*, discusses the concept of ‘nation’, and points out that it is not the same as
the concept of ‘state’. He writes:

Definitions of a nation have remained remarkably constant since the nineteenth century. They are concerned with culture, traditions, descent and identity. States, on the other hand, are legal, political and constitutional institutions (Reynolds 1996, 176).

He notes that in other countries this distinction is clearly recognised. For example, ‘Canadians both commonly and officially refer to the Inuit, the Indians and the Métis as first nations’ (p. 177). Nevertheless these are all part of the one state, one political entity, namely Canada. In Australia, from federation onwards, there has been the desire to affirm that we are not only one state, but also one nation. The White Australia Policy was meant to ensure this; and it was believed at the time of federation that the Aboriginal people were dying out. But, as Reynolds writes:

We have never been one nation, popular rhetoric notwithstanding...we share a country, a continent and a state, but not a nation (Reynolds 1996, 178).

He suggests that perhaps we are, or could become, three nations in the one state; but two of these nations would be very small, namely the Aboriginal people and the Torres Strait Islanders (p. 177).

**Two Founding Peoples:**

Christopher Prowse, in an article published in 1997, makes use of the concept of ‘founding peoples’. He writes:

I wonder if it may be helpful, therefore, to encourage a concept in our present times which begins with the premise that there has existed not one but two founding peoples of Australia. The vision would be that Australians of the third millennium living in one of the most pluricultural nations on earth, would look back in gratitude on its history and praise the mutually enriching contributions of its two founding peoples: Aboriginal Australians and largely Anglo-Celtic Australians (Prowse, 1997, 77).

And he continues:

If this concept is to be encouraged then a more attentive, sustained and positive assessment of the Aboriginal contribution to Australia’s present way of life ought to become a part of the nation’s reflex thinking.

There are some comments to be made on these quotations. First, although only Aboriginal people are mentioned, the term is presumably meant to include Torres Strait Islanders. Further, Prowse applies the word ‘nation’ to Australia, i.e. to the political entity. Thus he writes of Australia as ‘one of the most pluricultural nations’ on earth; and then also he refers to ‘the nation’s reflex thinking’. Thus there is still the notion of one nation. His significant contribution to the debate is to speak of ‘two founding peoples’. Here the word ‘people’ refers to a cultural tradition; and in putting on equal terms the Aboriginal and the ‘largely Anglo-Celtic’ cultural traditions, he is putting far greater emphasis on the Aboriginal contribution than we have done up to this time. Now it is true that he does speak of this as a contribution ‘to Australia’s present way of life’, which would seem to imply some kind of acceptance of the status quo. Yet his notion of ‘two founding peoples’, with the assumption that both are of essential importance to Australia today, does mean that considerable structural changes are required in our society, in order to give proper expression to this notion. This is confirmed by a passage later in the article, where he writes of:

…a healing social environment from which may emerge formalised social realities such as, for example, a more adequately expressed Australian Constitution that acknowledges Aboriginal people as the first Australians, a more courageous approach to the formulation of a treaty with the Aboriginal people, a reconciling response to the legal consequences of the Mabo decision and a greater determination to fulfil Australia’s international obligations (Prowse, 1997, 82).

Especially noteworthy here is the reference to ‘the formulation of a treaty with the Aboriginal people’. Such a treaty presumably would be between nations. Yet there is no thought here of Aboriginal secession from the political state of Australia.
Reconciliation?

In the Conclusion of his book, *Aboriginal Sovereignty*, Henry Reynolds muses over the question: what direction should Australia take in the future? At one point he makes some illuminating comments about the concept of reconciliation. He asks:

What of the process of reconciliation? It is manifestly a worthy objective but it is not completely clear who is to be reconciled to what or to whom (p. 183).

Looking at the matter from an Aboriginal and Islander point of view, he makes the ironic comment:


that is the case they have already delivered.

The more pressing question concerns non-Indigenous Australians, and what they are to be reconciled with. His suggestion is challenging:

What might be expected is an acceptance of the existence and validity of indigenous nationalism and a commitment to seek ways in which it can be accommodated beneath the overarching roof of the Australia state. That would be a gesture of appropriate gravity, magnitude and generosity (p. 184).

One can only hope that the non-Indigenous people of Australia, and the government that represents them, can have the sense of justice, the greatness of spirit, and the basic humanity to make such a gesture.

REFERENCES

At the beginning of time, as God’s Spirit moved over the waters, he began to communicate something of his goodness and beauty to all creation. When God then created man and woman, he gave them the good things of the earth for their use and benefit; and he put into their hearts abilities and powers, which were his gifts. And to all human beings throughout the ages God has given a desire for himself, a desire which different cultures have tried to express in their own ways.

As the human family spread over the face of the earth, your people settled and lived in this big country that stood apart from all the others. Other people did not even know this land was here; they only knew that somewhere in the southern oceans of the world there was ‘The Great South Land of the Holy Spirit’.

But for thousands of years you have lived in this land and fashioned a culture that endures to this day. And during all this time, the Spirit of God has been with you. Your ‘Dreaming’, which influences your lives so strongly that, no matter what happens, you remain for ever people of your culture, is your only way of touching the mystery of God’s Spirit in you and in creation. You must keep your striving for God and hold on to it in your lives.

—John Paul II to the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Blatherskite Park, Alice Springs, 29 November, 1986.
ON THE 12th of September 2006 Pope Benedict XVI visited the University of Regensburg where he used to teach and gave an academic lecture entitled ‘Faith, Reason and the University’.1 His theme was the necessary compatibility between reason and faith, and the reverse side of that same position, the necessary incompatibility of religion and violence. His address was directed primarily against an aggressive ‘Western’ secularism that denies the inherent intelligibility of faith and relegates religion to the sidelines of public life as a matter of private opinion.

To introduce his topic Pope Benedict quoted from his recent reading of Professor Khoury’s account of the 14th century dialogue between the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologus and a Persian scholar on the controversial topic of ‘holy war’. The Pope first affirms that the emperor must have known the Quranic injunction in surah 2:256: ‘There is no compulsion in religion.’ Secondly, he quotes the emperor’s accusations against Muhammad in relation to spreading faith by violence. And thirdly, he again cites the emperor: ‘God’, he says, ‘is not pleased by blood—and not acting reasonably (óòí ëüãù) is contrary to God’s nature. Faith is born of the soul, not the body…To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death…’ All of the above is preamble to ‘the decisive statement in the [emperor’s] argument against violent conversion,’ a statement which the Pope repeats in the middle of his lecture and again in his conclusion—‘not to act in accordance with reason is contrary to God’s nature.’

The Pope’s first and third steps are largely uncontested,2 but his inclusion of the middle quotation was most unfortunate because it could have been omitted without any detriment to the case he was making, which, as noted above, was against an aggressive secularism that discounts the reasonableness of faith, a point on which nearly all Muslims would agree, and was not against Islam or its Prophet. The offending quotation is a negative stereotype associating the spread of Islam with violence. However, the mediaeval emperor’s accusation can hardly be considered impartial and unprejudiced, since it was made when his city was under siege from Muslim armies. Pope Benedict had noted this historical context but had not elaborated its modifying significance with regard to evaluating the reliability of the quote. He had also noted the quote’s ‘startling brusqueness,’3 ‘a tone which sounds surprisingly harsh to our ears,’4 and even ‘crude.’5 He cited the emperor as ‘having expressed himself so forcefully’6 or as ‘having lashed out’7—both of which translations indicate the emotive intensity of the mediaeval accuser’s assessment of Islam and the Prophet. However, despite the above indications, because Pope Benedict did not clearly dissociate himself from either the content or the tone of the offending quote, he left himself open to the impression of being in agreement with it.
Finally, the quotation was unfortunate because the negative furore that has subsequently arisen (or been deliberately provoked) by ‘sound bite’ presentations of the quote divorced from the academic context of his lecture has prevented many people from appreciating the very positive point that the Pope was making about the rationality of faith, indeed, of all faiths. To the dismay of most Muslims, the very irrationality of the more impassioned protests by a tiny fringe of extremists supposedly in defence of Islam and the Prophet but usually in order to promote their own ‘Islamic’ credentials to a gullible audience, and the scattered acts of violent reprisal have merely served to confirm the violent stereotype. But this sad outcome underlines and confirms the importance and necessity of reasoned discourse within and between believers from the two religions, the very point that Pope Benedict was making.

Christian and Muslim representatives have commented on the Pope’s lecture and on the various reactions and responses from around the world. The Pope has since apologized, not for his words, but for the adverse reactions to his address; has clarified his positive intent; has clearly distanced himself from the content and tone of the offending quotation; and has re-affirmed his personal respect for Muslims in line with the teaching of Vatican II:

I wished to explain that not religion and violence, but religion and reason, go together. I hope that my profound respect for world religions and for Muslims, who ‘worship the one God’ and with whom we ‘promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values for the benefit of all humanity’ (Nostra Aetate, 3), is clear. Let us continue the dialogue both between religions and between modern reason and the Christian faith!*

All religions claim high ideals of spirituality, of morality, of rationality, and we believers must keep on proclaiming these ideals. But history shows that not all believers have lived up to these high ideals at all times, and Christians and Muslims are no exception, both having used imperial force, financial gain and emotive discourse to win converts, to spread their rule, to suppress heresy and schism, and to prescribe the practice of other religions.

Despite the Gospel’s clear injunction - ‘Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s’ (Mt 22:21) - Christianity since Constantine has often aligned with empire for religious ends: for example, in the mediaeval inquisition, in the religious wars of 16th and 17th century Europe, in complicity in the European colonial enterprise, and in shabby alignments with political parties.

Islam too, despite the equally clear Quranic injunction against violence quoted above, and because it does not clearly distinguish religion and state, has also at times availed of empire for religious ends: for example, the expansion of Islamic rule within a military context (e.g. the 14th century army that besieged the city of the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologus), and in state-sponsored preferential treatment for Islamic institutions to the detriment of non-Muslim minorities.

Believers in each tradition may rightly claim that the above instances were aberrations, that they are not true Christianity, or true Islam—but that very admission confirms the discrepancy between ideal and practice.

Although Judaism and Christianity were both transformed by their encounters with Hellenic rationalism—Pope Benedict summarizes both developments in his lecture—Christians cannot claim exclusive propriety of reason. The collaboration of Christian, Jewish and

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Muslim scholars in the 8th century ensured that the Greek heritage of reason was gathered, preserved and developed in the Arab Muslim world, where the application by scholars to all fields of learning contributed to the flourishing of Islamic civilizations while Europe languished in the superstitions of the Dark Ages. Then in 11th-12th century Cordoba, Toledo and Sicily the collaboration of Jewish, Christian and Muslim scholars passed this heritage back to Europe, where the encounter between Christian systematic theology and Greek rationality provided a new synthesis which contributed to the high achievement of mediaeval scholasticism, leading in turn to the European Renaissance and the subsequent technological advances of Europe.

Despite their respective claims to rationality, Christianity has often opposed and only reluctantly conceded modern scientific developments, and Islam too has been reluctant to subject its tradition to modern critical scholarship. While both are rightly wary of a ‘scientism’ that *a priori* excludes religion, both will surely benefit from an authentic engagement with ‘the whole breadth of reason’ and be better able to serve the modern world.

Our long histories of both positive and more cautious engagements with reason remind us to keep a balanced perspective, especially in times of controversy. The stereotype of any religion as being wholly prone to violence and irrationality is an exaggeration, but has a grain of truth; and the pretence of any religion to being wholly benign and wholly rational is also an exaggeration, but it too has a grain of truth. The reality is that we are all a ‘mixed bag’. We cannot justly accuse any other of all ills without first taking responsibility for our own shortcomings, nor can we truly claim that we alone know all truth and goodness without first acknowledging the truth and goodness that is in the other.

While the more impassioned reactions of both attack and defence of the Pope’s address have inflamed sensibilities, this very fact confirms the basic positive intent of the Pope’s speech, the importance in today’s global village of a reasoned, courteous, sensitive and respectful dialogue between people of different cultures and religions.

This year, depending on the sighting of the new moon, *Ramadan*, the Muslim month of fasting began around the 25th of September. In the light of the recent controversy, may Christians and Muslims both avail of this ‘sacred time’ to turn to God and to each other to build friendship and mutual understanding on the basis of our shared spiritual bonds.

The many people of good-will from all faiths and none who followed these recent events will recognize that Pope Benedict clearly did not intend to offend but intended the good. But people of ill-will from all faiths and none will find in those same events opportunity to condemn religions other than their own, or to dismiss all religions as irrational. What the final outcome of the Pope’s lecture will be is best expressed in the following story, versions of which appear in nearly all traditions and religions:

Once there was a wise old man who lived at the top of a mountain. This wise old man meditated and shared valuable insights about life with people from a nearby village.

One day, three teenagers decided to trick the wise old man. One of the boys said, ‘This old man thinks he knows everything. Well, I’ll show him. I’m going to hold a bird behind my back and ask the old man if the bird is alive or dead. If he says it’s alive, I’ll crush the bird. If he says it’s dead, I will let the bird loose to fly away.’

With the plan set, the three boys climbed to the top of the mountain. There they saw the wise old man meditating in peaceful splendor. The boys walked over to the man and the one boy asked, ‘Wise old man, what do I have in my hand?’

Because the wise old man knew everything, he continued looking straight ahead and said, ‘The answer is in your hands, my son.’

Now the boy winked at his friends and said, ‘Wise old man, is the bird dead or alive?’ The wise old man turned and looked the boy in the eye and said, ‘The answer is in your hands, my son.’

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Now the boy winked at his friends and said, ‘Wise old man, is the bird dead or alive?’ The wise old man turned and looked the boy in the eye and said, ‘The answer is in your hands, my son.’
I am pleased to welcome you to this gathering that I wanted to arrange in order to strengthen the bonds of friendship and solidarity between the Holy See and Muslim communities throughout the world. (…) I thank all of you for responding to my invitation.

The circumstances which have given rise to our gathering are well known. I have already had occasion to dwell upon them in the course of the past week. In this particular context, I should like to reiterate today all the esteem and the profound respect that I have for Muslim believers, calling to mind the words of the Second Vatican Council which for the Catholic Church are the Magna Carta of Muslim-Christian dialogue: ‘The Church looks upon Muslims with respect. They worship the one God living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to humanity and to whose decrees, even the hidden ones, they seek to submit whole-heartedly, just as Abraham, to whom the Islamic faith readily relates itself, submitted to God’ (Nostra Aetate, 3). Placing myself firmly within this perspective, I have had occasion, since the very beginning of my pontificate, to express my wish to continue establishing bridges of friendship with the adherents of all religions, showing particular appreciation for the growth of dialogue between Muslims and Christians. (…) As I underlined at Cologne last year, ‘Inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue between Christians and Muslims cannot be reduced to an optional extra. It is, in fact, a vital necessity, on which in large measure our future depends’ (…) In a world marked by relativism and too often excluding the transcendence and universality of reason, we are in great need of an authentic dialogue between religions and between cultures, capable of assisting us, in a spirit of fruitful co-operation, to overcome all the tensions together.

(…) faithful to the teachings of their own religious traditions, Christians and Muslims must learn to work together, as indeed they already do in many common undertakings, in order to guard against all forms of intolerance and to oppose all manifestations of violence; as for us, religious authorities and political leaders, we must guide and encourage them in this direction. (…) Dear friends, I am profoundly convinced that in the current world situation it is imperative that Christians and Muslims engage with one another in order to address the numerous challenges that present themselves to humanity, especially those concerning the defence
COMPASS

and promotion of the dignity of the human person and of the rights ensuing from that dignity. When threats mount up against people and against peace, by recognizing the central character of the human person and by working with perseverance to see that human life is always respected, Christians and Muslims manifest their obedience to the Creator, who wishes all people to live in the dignity that he has bestowed upon them.

Dear friends, I pray with my whole heart that the merciful God will guide our steps along the paths of an ever more authentic mutual understanding. (…)

—Benedict XVI to the Ambassadors of countries with a Muslim majority and to the representatives of Muslim communities in Italy, 25 September 2006 (extracts).

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DEMONIZING AUSTRALIA’S CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM ARABS IN CARTOONS

ABE ATA

AUSTRALIAN AND other Western ignorance about the Arab world—its people, religion, culture and literature—has mutated into many stereotypical forms: jokes, cartoons, TV commercials, serials, songs and films.

Cartoons are particularly a unique species. They require different criteria of assessment and approach. Unlike editors and news analysts, cartoonists may not feel obliged to present all sides of the story. Rather they make a blunt assault on the characteristics of their subjects, and pride themselves on being selective in their presentation.

Clearly cartoons are created for a quick fix of entertainment. They present information and transmit unambiguous messages. They have also played a significant role in the defining of racial stereotypes.

The long-term effects of racist cartoons are enormous. My intuition compels me to believe that the damage caused to Australia’s Arab image—Christian and Muslim—is arguably beyond repair. Other minorities such as Aboriginals, Asians, Greeks and Italians have been the cartoonists’ delight since WWI, but with a difference. The pitch of imagery targeting Muslims finds no match. Its persistence has exceeded thirty years—the longest of what any other minority has endured. The extent of psychological maim may warrant a nationally funded survey. Admittedly, the so-called Arab (Christian and Muslim) community leaders have made bad lawyers in presenting their case.

Following the Six-Day War Australian cartoonists adopted a different standard of assessment from those of ordinary journalists. To them an ‘objective’ political caricature has been considered a contradiction in terms. For a Muslim caricature to help sell more editions, the political or social comment must be graphic, blunt and succinct. It should also lead to a distortion of selected behavior or morals.

Cartoonists in the Australian/Western press tend to pride themselves on their independence, and so they consider protests from their victims as attacks on their own integrity. On several occasions they recognised that their success depends on their ability to reflect the prejudices and preferences of their readership. On most other occasions they seem to reflect those of their employers.

When the recent racial vilification laws were introduced most Australian cartoonists defended demonizing Muslims in cartoons as satire. A cartoonist of a regional paper rejected the accusation that he was a propagandist promoting a particular editorial posture. However, he recognized that Muslim caricatures were often more effective in influencing community attitudes than news and current affairs programs.

A 20th century Punch-like caricature of a bog Irishman or long-nosed Jew, or Norman Lindsay’s grotesque Huns or Chinamen now seem repugnant. Not so the caricatures of Australia’s Christian and Muslim Arabs. Clearly the cartoons are now infrequent, but are highly pitched when they surface. Early in the nineties a sign placed in the foyer of a
Melbourne theatre, where Barry Humphries’ *An Evening’s Intercourse* was being staged, offered an unequivocal directive: ‘Arabs, use the dunnies [toilets] please’. Barry, despite undergoing wholesome education, lapsed in projecting a golden heart on this occasion. He triumphantly offered a full range of tired clichés concerning power-mad dictators and Middle Eastern squalor in his film *Les Patterson Saves The World*. The human side and grievances of ordinary citizens deprived of basic human rights remained untouched. Other ethnic groups (notably, of course, Jews) have protested admirably and steadfastly against such vilifications, aided by changes in community attitudes.

Why is such stereotyping still considered acceptable when it is applied to Arabs and Muslims? Part of the answer may lie in the inability of Australia’s small Arab Christian and Muslim population to counter such propaganda. Occasional complaints made to the Australian Press Council or the Human Rights Commission appear to be brushed off. As a group, Arabs are an economically-deprived group within Australia. Arriving relatively recently, many of them (34%) are without a job—the highest among 144 ethnic groups. Arab and Muslim communities have an apparently limited understanding of the workings of Australian media and politics. And by extension, it seems, they are still novices in the art of public relations. One day I called a Muslim editor of a leading paper in Sydney suggesting ways to repair the damage inflicted by cartoonists. His immediate response was ‘Why should we? We know the truth...’

The lecherous Arab has long been a pervasive stock figure in Western popular culture. This preoccupation with sexuality reflects images of the harem, the polygamist, the white slaver and the like. Even the old standby the ‘Gypo’ selling dirty postcards still seems to be potent enough to titillate cartoonists. Trading on these images a leading book publisher in Melbourne now sells postcards projecting Muslim obsession with sex for forty-five cents.

Another potent cartoon shows a Muslim-Arab oil sheikh holding the West to ransom. The image is rooted in mistrust of those oil sheikhs held responsible for threatening oth-
ers’ lifestyles by controlling oil flow. (This scenario, of course, ignores the fact that only 10% of the world’s Arab population lives in the major oil producing states). Pre-WWII German and French cartoonists caused similar damage on Jewish bankers and, by implication, the rest of their community.

Thirdly, the myth propagated by the Western media is that all Arabs are Moslems and all Moslems are Arabs was equally damaging. Thus, Indonesians and Malaysians are not generally portrayed in cartoons bearing the appurtenances of Islam. This despite the reality that they are among those oil producers who held the West to ‘ransom’, and at times pose a vague ‘threat’ against Australia.

The well-being of some twenty-five million Christian Arabs minority worldwide who are minority groups (namely Palestinian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Iraqi, Jordanian and Syrian), is conveniently ignored. Presumably because all organised Christian-Arab activity is non-political and non-violent, the community hardly ever hits western headlines. Said an independent journalist: ‘Islamists are equated with terrorists whose stories sell more copy than people who congregate for Bible study’.

There is little evidence that a direct hostility to Islam is part of the ideology of the secular Australia. This has little bearing on the prejudices that have survived from European history. They reveal a destiny to which an ordinary Muslim is chained—one that fixes him, and also students at school, to a series of set reactions. Several books in Australian school libraries were found to show that the ordinary Muslim does not escape the ‘fanaticism’ image of Ayatolla Khomeini in several school textbooks. One of these is The Book of the Year (Allan & Unwin, 1981). These books depict dozens of cartoons. They show various caricatures depicting greedy exploiters, terrorists
and arrogant nationalists—all subject to the irrationalities of religious belief. The book has never been banned from school libraries.

These cartoon stereotypes may eventually disappear if the media changes its approach to the situation. The media needs to report the very real pain experienced by Christian and Muslim Arabs in Australia, and their brothers and sisters who suffer daily due to the absence of human rights in the Middle East.

And whilst any cartoonist, Australian and others, must perforce deal in stereotypes, there are stereotypes which are outdated, insensitive and threaten community harmony. It is reasonable to suggest an end for satirists’ pens in drawing these old images, and to withdraw such books from Australian schools.

Demonizing the cartoonists’ prejudices is always a better option.

* Cartoons reproduced with permission.

Oppression is the negative outcome experienced by people targeted by the cruel exercise of power in a society or social group. The term itself derives from the idea of being ‘weighted down.’

(...) Oppression is most commonly felt and expressed by a widespread, if unconscious, assumption that a certain group of people are inferior. Oppression is rarely limited solely to government action. (Cf. ‘Oppression’ in Wikipedia.)
WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Part II: ‘Ordained’ and ‘Lay Apostolate’

ANTHONY GOOLEY

In Part One (Compass 2006 no.3) we considered two terms from the Second Vatican Council, ‘common priesthood’ and ‘ministry’, and in this article we consider two other terms, ‘ordained’ and ‘lay apostolate’. We will conclude consideration of the four terms by proposing some of the criteria that we might use to evaluate the success of the Council in renewing the life of the local Church. The focus of these reflections is the Roman Catholic Church, which is a communion of a number of churches of the Eastern and Western Christian traditions.

Orders and Ordination

I intend to explore orders and ordination through the perspective of four pairs of ideas held in tension. These paired ideas may be considered as part of a theological matrix which can assist us to explore the sacrament of orders in Roman Catholic theology from a number of perspectives. The aim here is not to provide a definitive list of ideas but simply to provide a tool for reflection and analysis. These four tensions we will consider are:

• From above and from below
• Local and universal
• Male and female
• Inclusion and exclusion

The first pairing concerns the genesis of orders and structure in the Roman Catholic Church. In its nature the Church is a hierarchy in the truest sense of the word; that is, its origins are from above and not below. Hierarchy is another name that creates confusion as it sometimes takes on negative overtones when it is immediately identified with clergy and with the bishops in particular. La Cugna outlines the true understanding of hier-arche in the Greek sense of the word; ‘The Church makes a claim about itself that no other human community does, that its origins are divine’ (La Cugna, 1991,p271). The Church is not primarily a social reality but a theological one. The Church does not exist because it is a collection of people who believe in Jesus and share some religious interests. It is not like a social club that exists based on shared interests or a democracy which exists as an expression of a social contract among the citizens and power elements within society. The Church exists because it is the body of Christ. God calls it into life and it is sustained in that life through the constant invocation of the Holy Spirit. Certain elements of the church’s structure, such as orders, are part of the God-given nature of the Church. Sacraments are one of the means by which God provides for and nourishes the life of the Body. Throughout history the church has shaped and adapted the gift of orders in different ways, through the complex interaction of theological reflection and social and cultural elements, but this does not detract from the essence of the sacramentality of order. Order emerges in the life of the Church as a given, from above as it were, in response to the divine and not from below as an entirely human design.

All of the baptised are members of an order. This is seen most clearly when the Church is gathered for Eucharist. The whole Body of Christ, which is the Church, offers the Eucharistic sacrifice when all participate in the worship fully, actively and consciously (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 10). The order of
laity is no more nor less vital to the proper celebration of the Eucharist than the deacons, priests or bishop. Indeed, Mass cannot be celebrated without the presence of some of the order of laity under normal circumstances (can. 906). Order is a dimension of the priesthood of all of the people which in itself is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. When we fail to recognise the equal dignity of the whole people of God and imagine that there is a trickle-down view of holiness or priestliness then we are likely to slip into clericalism, a sense of hierarchy which is an expression of privilege and power. We know from the history of the Church that such a temptation toward clericalism is not easily avoided. It is precisely because of this temptation that a proper understanding of hierarchy needs to be recovered. One of the unfortunate consequences of reaction to clericalism is the temptation to reject all hierarchy and thereby deny some aspects of the essential nature of the life of the Church.

The second tension is between local and universal. There is no universal ordination in the Roman Catholic Church; a man is ordained for and into his local Church or diocese. Canon 6 of the Council of Nicea expressly forbids the idea that a man or woman could be ordained without specific reference to the community to which he or she belongs: there is no universal ordination. (At this time the Church ordained women and men as deacons and men only to priesthood and episcopate.) A man who is ordained must be incardinated into the diocese or local church and he is granted faculties to minister sacraments by his local bishop (Cans 265-272). He cannot celebrate the sacraments in another diocese without at least the implied permission of the local bishop. For example, when a priest or deacon is invited by a relative to preside at a wedding in another diocese he would need to ask permission of the local priest; but to work in another diocese for an extended period he would need to be incardinated into the new diocese and have permission to leave his own.

The significance of local ordination is that it tells us that ordination is not a personal gift for the individual but a relational sacrament. Ordination is an expression of the koinonia that is the Church and only makes sense within the context of a community. Ordination places the ordained in a new relationship within a living local church through which Christ is made visible. Priests and deacons are not a sacred caste set apart from the living worshipping community, but members of the one Body of Christ gathered around their bishop along with the laity. When a deacon or priest is removed from, or away from, the local Church into which he has been incardinated he ceases to have a function in the life of that community. When communion is restored he can again minister, but no re-ordination is necessary because each of the sacraments of order (baptism, confirmation and Holy Orders) imprint character, conform the recipient to Christ, and do not need repeating. Ordination is a reminder that the ordained is one with, not one above, the community; he comes from and is related to, even dependent on, the local community which together call down the Holy Spirit as Lord and Giver of life. Ordination reorients the one ordained within the communion, that is the local church, and he becomes connected to it in a way that the laity of the local Church is not. The order of laity can continue their work in any diocese and are free to move between any diocese of their choosing whereas deacons, priests and bishops do not have that choice.

The third tension that will be considered
is between male and female. Roman Catholic, Orthodox and some Protestant Churches do not ordain women to the ministry. For some Christians the restriction of ordination to men only is viewed as an injustice and a betrayal of the new dispensation whereby ‘…there is no longer male and female, all of you are one in Christ Jesus.’ (Gal 3:28). Some argue on the basis of this text and our common priesthood that women and men could be called to ministerial leadership. A variety of arguments and statements based on Scripture and Tradition are proposed to justify the view that priestly ordination is reserved to men only. Reservation of priestly ordination to men only is an authoritative but not a dogmatic teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. No equivalent statements have ever been made about the ordination of women to the diaconate and the question remains much more open because of the certain knowledge that women were ordained as deacons up until the tenth century. The precise role of women deacons in the life of the Church remains a subject for further study. One of the consequences of opposition to the male only ordination rule of some Churches is that some may be tempted to oppose all ordination and to seek to do away with a distinct ministry but, as we saw in Part I, this is not justified by the Scriptures.

In some sense the question of ordination of women remains one for the future agenda of the Roman Catholic Church in spite of the statements of John-Paul II that the question is settled. Even if the Roman Catholic Church does not engage in consideration of the possibility of the ordination of women to its own ministry it is in ecumenical dialogues with Churches that do ordain women. If Roman Catholics and these churches are to move toward full communion with each other the mutual recognition of the validity of orders will have to be considered and resolved. It hardly seems possible that there could be full communion if one Church refused to recognise the validity of ministries in partner churches. There will come a time when Churches in dialogue with each other will have to consider the justification for restricting ordination to men only. In the interim it would be a great loss to the Church if consideration about ministry and ordination were drowned in a sea of polemic about women’s ordination or that women felt unable to participate in the sacramental life of the Church because of a male-only ministry.

The final tension is inclusion and exclusion. This tension involves a fundamental misconception of the roles of presider and congregation in the liturgical action. Language which speaks of ordination as granting the power to preside over the liturgical celebration and especially to consecrate seems to indicate that the minister is the one whose exclusive responsibility is the liturgical action. Such language seems to suggest that the priest alone consecrates the elements and makes each of the other sacraments effective. In reality the liturgical action is inclusive of the entire congregation. The priest speaks the words in the name of the congregation it is ‘we’ who ask this through Christ our Lord and it is ‘we’ who offer the Father these gifts…, only two of the prayers of the Mass are spoken by the priest in his own name. It is the entire assembly which prays ‘through him, with him and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit…(‘him’ refers to Jesus)” And most importantly each sacrament is effective because the whole assembly, in communion with one another, prays the epiclesis or invocation of the Holy Spirit. It is the Body of Christ, the Church, which prays, ‘we bring you these gifts and we ask you to make them holy by the power of the Holy Spirit’ (Eucharistic Prayer III). Being in the Body of Christ means that there is no exclusion in the liturgical action but there are different roles assigned to each order and when each order fully lives out the part assigned to it then the Church becomes fully herself, ‘the whole Body achieves full growth in dependence on the full functioning of each part’ (Eph 4.16). The life of the Church is not restricted to her liturgical and sacramental activity, for
worship flows into and animates the mission of the People of God.

**Lay Apostolate**

‘In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but unity of mission’ (Vatican II, *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*, par. 2) The whole Church is called to live out the mission of Christ in the world but only some are called to ministry. The laity is called to the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ and the characteristic of lay life is to live the gospel in the midst of the world and to be as it were the leaven of the Kingdom (*loc. cit.*). It is because of their communion with God in Christ that each lay person is called to practical apostolic action. The orientation of the laity is toward the world and toward engagement in it, and transformation of it through living the gospel. The significance of the rite of dismissal in the liturgy, whereby the deacon or priest send the community out into the world, is sometimes lost through poor liturgical practices which link the prayer after communion to the dismissal and sending. Greater attention to the dismissal would indicate that almost the entire purpose of the gathering has been for this sending forth to live the Gospel. The community assembles to be built up and nourished by the Word of God in order that we might live the gospel in the circumstances of everyday life. This is the principal duty of the laity, who are not only the majority of the Church but the part of the Church which is most in contact with society and able to effect its transformation. The lay apostolate is not some lesser degree of the apostolic life of the Church, it is the heart and purpose of it. The role of the clergy is to build up and prepare the laity for living the gospel. Of course, the clergy are not absolved from their responsibility to transform the world.

One of the great fruits of Vatican II has been the increase in involvement of the laity in so many aspects of the life of the Roman Catholic Church. It is truly a blessing for which we should give thanks. Many more lay people are involved in the Church as readers, special ministers of communion, acolytes and catechists, along with many other roles. All of these are valuable and the Church today would not function without such involvement. It would be a pity if we measured the success of lay involvement solely by lay participation in intra-church focussed functions. As important as all of these are they are not the essential tasks of the lay apostolate. Imagine if all of the laity fully embraced the lay apostolate as outlined through the teaching of the Council, what impact might this have on our society? Imagine every Christian actively involved in the cause of social justice, advocacy for refugees and people with disabilities for example. Imagine in every factory, office and boardroom in the nation, if Christians applied the gospel to their work relationships and the running of their businesses. Imagine a community transformed by the Body of Christ, being built up through the Eucharist, pouring out their lives in the service of the world. The extent to which lay Christians live the lay apostolate is the best measure of the outcomes of the Vatican Council.

**A Matter of Emphasis**

We have every right to celebrate the achievements that have come from the renewal of the Church that commenced with the Second Vatican Council. Many lay people are discovering a love for the Bible, joining prayer groups, participating in lay ministries and engaging with ecumenical and social justice issues with renewed vigour. Many Roman Catholics have noticed the renewal primarily through the celebration of Sunday liturgy. Many more laity are involved in the Mass through being readers, acolytes, altar servers, special ministers of Eucharist, choir members and musicians as well as other contributions to the liturgical celebration. Lay Catholics, many of whom are Religious Sisters, are working in parish roles such as catechists and pastoral associates. Each
of these things is good in itself and to be encouraged as a positive outcome of the Council. It would be wrong to take this type of involvement as the measure of success of the Council because the emphasis is on looking inward and nurturing the internal life of the Church. Yes, the Council called for the reform of the Church, not as an end in itself but so that the Church could serve and be a light of hope and love for the world.

The whole Church is called to work together. The ministers have primary concern for the building up of the body of Christ, although the laity, too, has a part in this. The ministry has a primary focus which is the life of the Church ad intra, that is, within itself. The ministers equip the saints so that they can live a gospel centred life. The priestly people sanctify the world through the liturgy, prayer and living the gospel, with all of the orders contributing its part. The primary focus of the laity is the life of the Church ad extra, to take the gospel into our culture, our politics, our economics and industrial relations—that is to the world. For the whole body to work effectively, each must play his or her part (1 Cor 12:12-26).

Better indicators of the depth to which the Council has penetrated the life of the Church are to be found in three key criteria. The first is the extent to which the community of believers has deepened their sense of communion with the Trinity. The second is the extent to which they have become aware of the deep bonds of communion they share with one another because of their baptism into the life of the Trinity. The third is a sense of shared mission and engagement in the search for unity among all Christians and commitment to justice in our world. The second criteria will have concrete expression through the quality of the worship experience and the real bonds of peace and genuine love that exist within the assembly and which continue throughout the week when they meet each other. Those who participate fully, actively and consciously in the worship cannot do so unless they have experienced a full, active and conscious experience of being parts of one another (Rom 12:4-5). The third criteria will have concrete expression through the energy and enthusiasm for working and praying alongside other Christians in regular and continual ecumenical endeavours. When we see parishes doing things ecumenically rather than doing ecumenical things we will know we are on the right track. We will see concrete expression of the third criteria when we come to see that our community is one that advocates for the poor, welcomes the refugee, makes room for people with disability and engages the parish fully, actively and consciously in social justice action.

Our gathering together on Sunday and worshipping with one mind and heart is critical and so are all those ministries which are aimed at the internal life (ad intra) of the Church. But in a very real way we gather in order to be sent. The name of Catholic worship is the Mass, which is derived from the last words of the Latin liturgy: Ite missa est—‘Go, you are sent’. We gather to be nurtured and fed by the Body of Christ in order that we might become the Body of Christ. In becoming that Body we too are called to share the mission and give our life for the world. This is what John alludes to when he writes ‘out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’ (7:38). Being a source of light and life to the world must be the ultimate measure of the success of the renewal of the Church and of lay life in particular, which is prompted by the Second Vatican Council.

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Dwyer, Sydney, 1992
NEW RELIGIOUS BOOKS BY AUSTRALASIAN AUTHORS

KEVIN MARK

And Gladly Teach: The Marist experience in Australia, 1872-2000; John Barniff; David Lovell Publishing; PB $24.95 [186355114X]; 256pp; 230x150mm; 2006

History of the contribution of the Marist Brothers to teaching in Australia, from their arrival in Sydney in 1872. A central focus of the study is the relationship between the Marist’s practice of pedagogy in Australia and the founding charism of the order’s French founder, St Marcellin Champagnat (1789–1840). This charism is examined in some detail, in addition to the chronological account of the order in Australia. Book is an abbreviated version of the author’s doctoral thesis; he has previously completed histories of three major Marist schools, St Ildephonsus’ College, New Norcia, WA (unpublished Master’s thesis); Assumption College, Kilmore, Victoria (The Quest for Higher Things, 1992); and St Patrick’s College, Church Hill, NSW (From Cradle to Canonization, 2001). Author was a Marist Brother for 35 years, serving a headmaster and provincial councillor in the Marist Melbourne Province. He has degrees from the Melbourne College of Divinity, Murdoch University (WA), and the Universities of Sydney, New England and San Francisco. Footnotes; bibliography; index.

Australian Religious Diary 2007: Special Blake Prize edition; David Lovell (editor); David Lovell Publishing; HB $32.00 [1863551158]; 132pp; 240x175mm; 2006

Religious diary for Australian use from 3 December 2006 (First Sunday of Advent) until 5 January 2008. Each week-to-an-opening indicates Catholic feast days and daily lectionary readings, as well as the major feasts and holy days of Eastern Rite Catholics, the Anglican, Uniting, Lutheran and Orthodox churches, and of the Jewish and Muslim religions. Liturgical colours for each Sunday are indicated. Illustrated with 18 reproductions, 11 in colour, of art and sculpture by Australian artists, selected from entries for the 2005 Blake Prize for Religious Art. Includes introduction to the Blake Prize by Rod Pattenden, as well as notes on the artists. The diary has been published annually since 1993.

Bernadette of Lourdes: Her life, death and visions; Thérèse Taylor; Continuum, UK, dist. by Allen & Unwin; PB $23.95 [0860124118]; 360pp; 225x145mm; 2007

Reissue of a scholarly biography of Bernadette Soubirous, apparently the first ever in English or French. First published 2003. Traces Bernadette’s story from her impoverished upbringing, through the reported visions and miracles at Lourdes, her life as a Religious, and her death. Draws on previously unpublished testimonies and archival sources. Author makes no judgement on whether Bernadette’s visions were genuine. She places Bernadette’s life and death into the context of her time, and examines her not only in religious terms, but also with reference to themes such as tourism, commercialism, mass-representation and the exploitation of female celebrities. Photos; notes; bibliography; index. Author is a lecturer in Modern History at Charles Sturt University.

Choice for Whom?: A discussion of the 2005 industrial relations laws; Dr Tim Battin; Australian Catholic Social Justice Council; PB $6.60 [1864202750]; 40pp; 215x140mm; 2006

Number 58 in the ‘Catholic Social Justice’ series. Examination of the Australian Federal government’s ‘WorkChoices’ legislation which came into force in March 2006. Author, a political economist, focuses on the
NEW RELIGIOUS BOOKS BY AUSTRALASIAN AUTHORS

Allen & Unwin; PB $14.95 [0819222003]; 64pp; 150x100mm; 2006
Pocket-sized practical guide to the art of hospital visitation, written especially for lay people who volunteer to visit fellow parishioners who are ill. Chapters cover ‘Off to Hospital’, ‘Visiting the Patient’, ‘Respecting the Patient’, ‘Observe’ and ‘Relatives and Friends’. Supplementary sections cover ‘Nonverbal Communication Indicators’, ‘Voice Characteristics and Their Meaning’ and ‘Death and You’. Author is an ordained minister who has had 20 years experience as a hospital chaplain in Australia. He has a doctorate of ministry from the San Francisco Theological Seminary. Other books include Pastoral Care to Muslims (1991) and A Hospital Handbook on Multiculturalism and Religion (2nd ed., 2006).

Just James: The brother of Jesus in history and tradition;
John Painter; T&T Clark, Scotland, dist. by Allen & Unwin; PB $75 [1570035237]; 342pp; 215x140mm; 2006
Reprint in the ‘T&T Clark Academic Paperbacks’ series. Originally published in the ‘Studies on Personalities of the New Testament’ series by University of South Carolina Press, 1997. Detailed scholarly examination of biblical and other ancient texts to recover the figure of James, known as the ‘brother’ of Jesus, and his role in the formation of the early Christian church. Part 1 examines the New Testament texts, considering James and the family of Jesus in the Gospels, James in the Acts of the Apostles, the relationship of James and Paul in the latter’s Letters, and diversity in conflict in the missions of James, Peter, Matthew and Paul. Part 2 examines images of James in other texts from the period of the early church, including Eusebius, Gnostic texts, and other Apocrypha. The final chapter considers James and Jewish Christianity, and the Epistle of James. Excursus on Robert Eisenman’s James the Brother of Jesus (1997); footnotes; bibliography; index of biblical and ancient sources; index of modern authors; index of subjects. Author is Professor of Theology at St Mark’s National Theological Centre, Charles Sturt University, Canberra. Other works include Quest for the Messiah (2nd ed., 1993) and Reading Mark: Worlds in conflict (1997).

The Little Gift of Julian of Norwich;
Karen Manton; Lynne Muir (illustrator); John Garratt Publishing; HB $9.95 [1920721411]; 8pp; 105x105mm; 2006
Giftbook that reproduces selected texts and artwork from The Gift of Julian of Norwich (2005). One of ‘The Little Gift’ series. The covers separate to reveal seven panels with brief texts from Julian’s A Book of Showings, in calligraphy and with colour illustrations by artist Muir. Includes panel on which a gift recipient can be written.

The Little Gift of Saint Benedict;
Vera A. Holyhead SGS; Lynne Muir (illustrator); John Garratt Publishing; HB $9.95 [1920721398]; 8pp; 105x105mm; 2006
Giftbook that reproduces selected texts and artwork from The Gift of Saint Benedict (2002). One of ‘The Little Gift’ series. The covers separate to reveal seven panels with brief texts from the Rule of St Benedict, in cal-
ligraphy and with colour illustrations by artist Muir. Includes panel on which a gift recipient can be written.

The Little Gift of Saint Francis; John Davis; Don Monigle; Lynne Muir (illustrator); John Garratt Publishing; HB $9.95 [1920721401]; 8pp; 105x105mm; 2006

Giftbook that reproduces selected texts and artwork from The Gift of St Francis (2003). One of ‘The Little Gift’ series. The covers separate to reveal seven panels with prayers by St Francis of Assisi, in calligraphy and with colour illustrations by artist Muir. Includes panel on which a gift recipient can be written.

Morris West: Literary maverick; Maryanne Confoy; John Wiley & Sons Australia; PB $39.95 [1740311191]; 384pp; 230x155mm; 2005

Biography of one of Australia’s high-selling authors. Morris West (1916–1999) gained international acclaim with the novel The Devil’s Advocate (1959), and his more than 30 books and plays have sold over 70 million copies. He was best known for his novels related to the Catholic Church, including The Shoes of the Fisherman and The Clowns of God, but wrote more widely than this, generally combining popular fiction with moral questioning. Confoy presents West’s life chronologically, believing he was tormented by internal division, and considers his ambivalent relationship with the Catholic Church. Photos; endnotes; references; index. Author graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Melbourne and a PhD in theology and education at Boston College, USA. She lectures in practical theology at Jesuit Theological College, Melbourne, and is visiting professor at the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, Boston College. Previous books include the study Morris West: A writer and a spirituality (1997) and she was a contributing editor to Freedom and Entrapment: Women thinking theology (1995).


Daily prayer book for the 2007 liturgical year. It is based on the website www.sacredspace.ie, established in 1999 by Alan McGuckian SJ and Peter Scally SJ of the Jesuit Communication Centre, Ireland. The site has had over 20 million visits and is translated into 20 languages. The book presents the same process of prayer: each week begins with ‘Something to think and pray about each day this week’, then six brief ‘stages of prayer’, which include a scripture reading that differs each day (and is reproduced in full, along with brief pointers for reflection). The first edition of the prayer book was published in 2004. The Australian connection is that local publisher Michelle Anderson produced the book, publishes it here, and licenses it to other publishers for international release, including Ave Maria Press in the USA. Includes the full text of the Order of the Mass, along with a separate section giving the people’s
parts in Latin. Following section, and body of the book, presents all biblical passages, prayers and other texts for each Sunday. Each Sunday includes an introduction and concluding reflection by Gearard Ó Floinn. Two-colour printing throughout.

Sundays Under the Southern Cross: Gospel reflections, Year C, Luke; Mary Coloe PBVM; John Garratt Publishing; PB $9.95 [1920721355]; 87pp; 135x100mm; 2006

Pocket-sized series of reflections on the Gospel readings for the Sunday Eucharist for Year C of the Catholic liturgical cycle. Most are from the Gospel of Luke, which is also briefly introduced by the author. For each Sunday the author provides the Gospel reference, a brief quote from it, a theme, and a short reflection based on the biblical text. Author’s companion volume, for Year B - Mark, was published 2005. Author teaches New Testament at Australian Catholic University and at St Paul’s Seminary, Brisbane. Previous books include God Dwells with Us: Temple symbolism in the Fourth Gospel (2001).

Theology of the Body Made Simple; Anthony Percy; Connor Court, www.connorcourt.com.au; PB $18.95 [097580152X]; 77pp; 210x150mm; 2005

Presentation for the general reader of the teaching of Pope John Paul II between 1979 and 1984 on what has been called ‘The Theology of the Body’. The pope’s teaching is seen to offer fresh insights into the human body and sexuality, human relationships, and married and single life. Drawing on the book of Genesis and human experience, the pope presents the following human experiences: original solitude, original unity, original nakedness, and original sin. In addition to explaining the papal teaching, the author applies this to various sexual activities. Foreword by Professor Kenneth Schmitz, associate fellow of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, and professor of philosophy, John Paul II Institute and Catholic University of America, Washington DC. Author is a priest of the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn where he is parish priest of Goulburn, NSW. He has a doctorate in sacred theology from the John Paul II Institute, Washington DC.

Welcoming the Word in Year C: With Burning Hearts; Vera A. Holyhead SGS; John Garratt Publishing; PB $24.95 [1920721312]; 224pp; 230x150mm; 2006

Collection of reflections on the lectionary readings for the Sunday liturgies for Year C. They are presented in chapters based on the liturgical seasons: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time. A final chapter presents ‘short conversations between the Sunday Lectionary and the Rule of Benedict’. Each chapter has endnotes. Published in the United States by Liturgical Press. Companion volumes by the author on the other Liturgical Years, A and B, are planned. Author is an Australian religious in the Benedictine tradition whose previous publications include Following the Cross (1998) and The Gift of Saint Benedict (2002).

Yielding to Love: Learning to follow our yearning for deeper communication with God; Michael Fallon; St Pauls; PB $24.95 [1921032030]; 206pp; 215x140mm; 2005

Guidebook for those seeking a deeper relationship with God. Part 1 reflects on the type of life one needs to live, and kind of heart one needs, if one’s communion with God is to grow. Part 2 reflects on active prayer; on ways one can learn to pray. Part 3 turns to passive prayer, which comes with opening oneself to God’s communion. Author draws on his expertise as a biblical scholar as well as the writings of the Carmelite saints Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. Foreword by Michael Casey OCSO. Bibliography. Author is a Missionary of the Sacred Heart who has lectured in Scripture at St Paul’s National Seminary, Sydney, been involved in adult faith education, and given numerous retreats. He is parish priest at Kippax, Canberra. Previous books include a series of commentaries on the New Testament writings (Chevalier Press, 1997–2005) and A Priest after My Own Heart: Exploring priestly spirituality (2001).

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PREPARING TO CELEBRATE THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

JANUARY — APRIL

From the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time to the Fourth Sunday of Easter (Year C)

Prepared by Michael Trainor

PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE READINGS

The following is a brief overview of the readings of the Liturgy of the Word for major celebrations proclaimed while this issue of Compass is current. It focuses on the readings for Sundays between (late) January to April, from the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time to the Fourth Sunday of Easter (Year C). Please feel free to use or adapt these reflections, with the customary acknowledgement of source.

Ordinary Time 2-7 (before Lent)

• Apart from OT 7 (with 1 Sam) the first readings during Ordinary Time are drawn from the prophetic tradition (Isaiah, Nehemiah and Jeremiah). As usual, all the readings are chosen thematically with a view to complement the gospel. Though this may be seen to limit their impact, it is important to reflect upon and proclaim the First Testament readings as readings addressing the Israelite people. Their theological insights are trans-temporal and trans-cultural. They still speak to us today as we seek to draw closer to God and experience the kinds of struggles similar to the original audience addressed by these readings.

• The second reading continues the semi-continuous selection from 1 Corinthians, Paul’s letter addresses a divided, struggling and charismatic Christian community. The issues that Paul addresses in these readings resonate still with us today. These concern celebration of the presence of God’s spirit (OT 2, 4, 7), how to respond to those excluded from the faith life of the Christian community (OT 3), and the implications of Jesus’ resurrection (OT 5, 6).

• Gospel selections over these Sundays continue to be from Luke (except for OT 2, which is from Jn 2:1-12, the wedding feast at Cana). Luke’s gospel is written for a missionary-challenged faith community in a multicultural and diverse world. The chapters of the gospel over these Sundays (Lk 4-6) present the early days of Jesus’ public ministry and teaching. It is important to recognise the potential trap that lurks in the gospel selection for OT 7. Jesus is not teaching a ‘door-mat’ style of passive discipleship, where the disciple simply turns the ‘other’ cheek to meet an aggressor’s slap. Rather a careful analysis of the text reveals a subtle proactive stance which subverts the reciprocal approach to aggression conventionally expected in Lk’s Greco-Roman world (‘You strike me, I strike you back!’). Non-violence is difficult when the cultural expectation is to return violence with violence. On this Sunday, a Eucharistic prayer from Masses of Reconciliation would be most appropriate to complement the Liturgy of the Word and its accompanying homily.
During Lent

The first readings of the Sundays of Lent enable communities to reflect on their journey of faith as echoed in the journey of Israel (with Abraham in Lent 1 and 2, Moses in Lent 3, Joshua in Lent 4, and the vision offered through Isaiah in Lent 5).

Various aspects of the Christian life important for our Lenten reflection emerge out of the second readings. Their focus concerns the heart of the Lenten journey, our union with God through Jesus (Lent 1, 2, 4 and 5).

The gospels for Lent 1 and 2 traditionally take up the story of Jesus’ temptation and transfiguration. They are drawn from the gospel of the year (Luke) and allow us to reflect on our own struggles with sin and temptation, and God’s desire for our transfiguration during Lent. Following the Year C gospels through to the end of Lent will unpack other appropriate Lenten themes (reconciliation in Lent 3, forgiveness and mercy in Lent 4, conversion in Lent 5).

Year A Readings for Lent

The Lectionary preference on the last three Sundays of Lent will always be the Year A readings with their accompanying gospel selections from John. These are wonderfully rich readings that pick up the most important theological motifs central to our journey of faith: on Lent 3, our thirst for God revealed in John’s story of Jesus with the story of the woman at the well (Jn 4); Lent 4’s theme of light in the story of the healing of the man born blind (Jn 9). These lead to the ultimate theme of Lent, resurrected life and freedom from Jesus as reflected upon in the story of his raising Lazarus from the grave (Jn 11). It is no wonder that these readings are so appropriate for catechumens preparing for the waters of baptism, and all of us who seek to deepen our communion with God. John’s gospel for Lent 5 is the perfect precursor to Holy Week and the celebration of Easter.

Easter Readings

The Easter gospel (Lk 24:1-12) allows us to accompany the women to the tomb and to hear the truth of Jesus’ resurrection. The women are told to ‘remember’ what they had experienced about Jesus in his ministry. This memory opens them up to the conviction of Jesus’ resurrection and the impulse to proclaim this to other disciples. When the male disciples hear the women’s message they think they are literally mad, and one of them (Peter) goes off to check out their story. That Luke deliberately retained this as part of the Easter story is instructive, especially as the official church looks for ways to enhance women’s leadership, ministry and proclamatory gifts in today’s faith community. Lk’s gospel also permits us to lament ways the Christian community has stifled the ministry of all, especially women.

The four Sundays of Easter further the celebration and implications of the risen Jesus for the life of the Christian community. The first readings from Acts offers vignettes of the life of the Jerusalem Christian community and reveals the presence of the risen Jesus in its preaching (with Peter on Easter Sunday and Easter 3, and Paul to the Gentiles on Easter 4) and healing practice (Easter 2). The second readings in Easter are all taken from the Book of Revelation. This is a wonderful piece of Second Testament literature frequently avoided by preachers and misunderstood by most. The Book was written for Christians experiencing struggle, persecution and rejection in Asia Minor in the late first century. The selections over Easter offer theologically poetic (and not literal) images of Jesus’ holiness (Easter 2), transcendent power and union with God (Easter 3), and God’s affirmation of those who struggle faithfully in their lives (Easter 4). The gospels of Easter 2-4 are from John. The risen Jesus breathes his spirit of peace and forgiveness on to the frightened disciples (Easter 2), prepares the community of disciples for its future (Easter 3) and, as usually occurs on Easter 4, reveals how he is the good shepherd.
COMPASS

PART TWO: NOTES ON THE READINGS

Jan 14—Ordinary Time 2: Is 62:1-5. In a time of exile and apparent abandonment, God reveals to the people of Israel that they will be God’s delight. 1 Cor 12:4-11. God’s spirit permeates the Christian community, releasing spiritual gifts within it. Jn 2:1-12. Jesus’ first sign reveals God’s joy with humanity symbolised in a wedding feast that results in an extraordinary amounts of wonderful wine. Theme—Be Delighted. The first reading and the gospel invite us to celebrate how God cherishes and delights in us. Sometimes this theological conviction is hard to come by, especially when things seem pretty tough. Today’s word will help to offer another perspective.

Jan 21—Ordinary Time 3: Neh 8:2-4, 5-6, 8-10. After the Israelite exile, the temple is rebuilt, the Torah is found, and the first liturgy of the word celebrated. This is a fine picture of how the Liturgy of the Word was celebrated in every generation. 1 Cor 12-30. Everyone, irrespective of social status, is important in the Christian household. Those most honoured are those considered socially disrespected. Now that’s a challenge! Lk 1:1-4: 4:14-21. The first verses of Lk and then (skipping over the story of Jesus’ birth) Jesus’ first proclamation of his ministry are essentially about liberating human beings. Theme—Proclaiming Freedom. Neh and Lk both present scenes of biblical preaching, one in the story of the renewed people of Israel, another at the commencement of Jesus’ public ministry. The scriptures are intended to nurture and liberate and bring their hearers a sense of happiness. This offers an opportunity to celebrate ways the Christian community continues this ministry today.

Jan 28—Ordinary Time 4: Jer 1:4-5, 17-19. The prophet is called to his mission even before birth; it is a divine commission that will succeed. 1 Cor 12:31-13:13. Paul celebrates the Spirit’s charism of love, the foundation of the life of the Christian household. Lk 4:21-30. Jesus’ preaching is not without its critics who seek to silence him. Their God is exclusive and different from the God that Jesus exalts. Theme—God’s inclusivity. The prophet and Jesus in today’s readings reveal a God whose vision is to embrace all people. This spirit of inclusivity is difficult for religious people (like ourselves) who always think that God only responds favourably to those who think the right thing or act correctly.

Feb 4—Ordinary Time 5: Is 6:1-2a, 3-89. The prophet is overwhelmed by the vision of God’s holiness and his call to the prophetic ministry. 1 Cor 15:1-11. Paul summarises the Easter event of Jesus’ resurrection and first appearances, including to himself, ‘the least of the apostles.’ Lk 5:1-11. Jesus calls Peter to follow him and ‘catch alive human beings.’ Theme—God’s Call to Us. Both Is and Lk reflect on aspects of how God’s calls us. Isaiah recognises God’s utter holiness; a similar disposition overwhelms Peter when confronted by Jesus and says ‘Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinner’ (Lk 5:8). Both readings offer an opportunity to celebrate God’s call of us individually and communally.

Feb 11—Ordinary Time 6: Jer 17:5-8. The prophet urges his people to place their trust in God alone. 1 Cor 15:12-16-20. Paul continues to reflect on the implication of Jesus’ resurrection. Lk 6:17, 20-26. The beginning of the ‘Sermon on the Plain’ addressed to disciples who are poor and rich. Theme—Focussed on God: Frequently we recognise God’s call within us to allow our lives to be shaped by God. Trust (Jer) and recognition of how our possessions can help us draw close to God (Lk) are key to living focussed on God.

Feb 18—Ordinary Time 7: 1 Sam 26:7-9, 12-13, 22-23. David has an opportunity to get even with King Saul, but refuses to do so. 1 Cor 15:45-49. Paul affirms the spiritual reality of our lives. Lk 6:27-38. This is a potentially dangerous text (see comment above). Rather than being passive and victimised by aggressors, Jesus teaches a pro-active response (‘love,’ ‘bless,’ ‘pray,’ ‘offer,’ ‘give’) that reveals God’s mercy. Theme—Responding to the Aggressor: International politics is founded on revenge and tit-for-tat aggression. It is the cause of inter-racial tension, tribal fighting and wars. 1 Sam and Lk promote a subversive wisdom where diplomacy and compassion become the ground rules for interaction. Both readings are most challenging today.

Feb 25—Lent 1: Dt 26:4-10. A summary of Israel’s story concerning Abraham’s wanderings and Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. Rom 10:8-13. Communion with God (‘being justified’) is God’s gift that comes through faith in Jesus. Lk 4:1-13. Jesus’ is tempted to break fidelity with God and rely solely on his own power. Theme—Our Story & Commitment:Dt reflects on the story of Israel.
This is picked up in the gospel (Lk), where Jesus’ story echoes that of Israel, in its temptations to live without God. The journey of Lent begins with a celebration of the way God has called each of us and to live guided by God.

**Mar 4—Lent 2: Gen 15:5-12, 17-18.** God calls Abram to make a covenant of loving commitment to him and his descendants. *Phil 3:17-4:1.** Paul envisions our true ‘commonwealth’ (v 20) realised in God’s transforming presence. *Lk 9:28b-36.** Jesus transfigures and the disciples encounter him in a new way. **Theme—Encountering God.**

The second week of Lent invites us to reflect on our encounters with God (as in Abram) and God’s encounter with us (through Jesus). Whether we are like Abram, and find ourselves often wandering, or like Jesus, who finds God in prayer and becomes transformed, we seek to draw closer to God.

**Mar 11—Lent 3 for Year C: Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15.** God commissions Moses to lead the people from slavery. This is a wonderful story of divine encounter. *1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12.** Paul urges his audience to listen and learn from the story of Israel. *Lk 13:1-9.** Time is God’s gift for healing, reconciliation and forgiveness. **Theme—Repentance.**

1 Cor and Lk provide invitations to allow this week of Lent to be one of sincere repentance and seeking forgiveness. Rather than a focus on private morality (what I have done wrong privately), forgiveness might be expressed in more global or ecological ways (what steps I can take to heal the ecological damage done to my world).

**Lent 3 for Year A. Ex 17:3-7.** The people complain about their thirst in the desert. God. *Rom 5:1-2, 5-8.** Paul affirms God’s love for us. This becomes the cause of hope. *Jn 4:5-42.** The great story of the woman at the well who meets the source of living water, Jesus. **Theme—Thirst Quenching: For what do we thirst? What are our deepest desires?**

The readings invite us in this week of Lent to renew our relationship with the source of Living Water, who satisfies us deeply.

**Mar 18—Lent 4 for Year C: Josh 5:9a, 10-12.** God’s people enter into the land given to them. The land is God’s gift and they celebrate it in a Passover. *2 Cor 5:17-21.** Our union with Jesus enables us to experience a new way of life (‘the new creation’), and how to be ministers of reconciliation. *Lk 15:1-3, 11-32.**

Here is one of the gospel’s great and rich parables about the embracing and forgiving father, the ability to change, and the stubbornness to resist welcoming the stranger. **Theme—Coming Home.**

Israel (Josh) and the young son (Lk) experience what it is like to finally come home. How can this happen and be celebrated in this faith community?

**Lent 4 for Year A: 1 Sam 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13** The anointing of David, the unexpected and unrecognized one, as king. *Eph 5:8-14.** Living in the light of God. *Jn 9.** This is a most dramatic story of the dawning insight about Jesus by the healed man born blind. **Theme—Light & seeing:**

This week of Lent offers an opportunity to name the ways that we deeply see, interpret and know our lives and world. It is an invitation to come to the source of light, Jesus.

**Mar 25—Lent 5: Is 43:16-21.** The prophet’s vision about God’s new action on behalf of the people. *Phil 3:8-14.** Paul is totally taken up by his commitment to Jesus and desire to be with him. *Jn 8:1-11.** Jesus forgives and challenges to a change of heart those who judge and condemn. **Theme—Doing something new.** The possibility of a new life, new future and new way of being forge a link between the first reading and gospel. What is it that we would like God to do for us that could renew or refresh us? How will this be seen? What signs are there already in this community that that is taking place?

**Lent 5 for Year A: Ex 37:12-14.** God promises to open the graves of the dead and lead Israel back from exile with a new spirit. *Rom 8:8-11.** God’s spirit possesses us. *Jn 11.** Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. **Theme—Life & resurrection:** Our readings climax the great themes of Lent in preparation for Easter – our resurrection and life. What brings us to life? What tangible signs are there that this is already happening around us?

**April 1—Passion Sunday: Lk 19:28-40.** The disciples welcome Jesus into Jerusalem as their King and leader. *Is 50:4-7.** God’s suffering servant learns to listen to God each morning. *Phil 2:6-11.** Paul’s great hymn of Jesus’ self-emptying and exaltation. *Lk 22:14-23:56.** Jesus’ suffers, is condemned and dies. Throughout he witnesses to God’s compassion and forgiveness. **Theme—Compassion and kindness.**

Lk’s passion story presents us with a figure of God’s beloved one who is able to respond to violence in an exalted, graceful and compassionate way. In a world of violence, Lk’s passion story needs constant meditation.

**April 5—Mass of the Lord’s Supper: Ex 12:4-8, 11-14.** Moses instructs the people how the Passover is to be celebrated. *1 Cor 11:23-26.** Paul remembers Jesus’ last meal with his friends before death.

**CELEBRATING THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**
Jesus’ act of foot-washing is a symbol of service and solidarity. Theme—Leadership: Jesus is the one who leads us to God. Authentic leadership is the cry of our Church, world, and community. How can tonight’s celebration identify and celebrate this kind of leadership already occurring within our local, national and international communities?

**April 6—Good Friday:** Is 52:13-53:12. This is a final servant song reflecting on his innocent suffering for others. Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9. Jesus feels for us because he can ‘sympathise with our weakness’ (v15). Jn 18:1-19:42 Jesus, the exalted one, suffers, and dies as innocent lamb and acclaimed king. The hour of death is the moment of exaltation, victory and community empowerment. Theme—Victory: God’s solidarity with suffering creation and humanity is revealed in Jn’s passion story of Jesus. God is victorious over death and everything that seeks to frustrate God’s design.

**April 8—Easter:** Acts 10:34a, 36-43. Peter sums up Jesus’ ministry and the meaning of ‘Holy Week’ for a Gentile centurion. 1 Cor 5:6b-8. Paul wants us to celebrate the risen Jesus with the ‘unleavened bread of sincerity and truth’ (v8). Lk 24:1-12. The women come to anoint Jesus’ body, but discover the tomb empty and the two men proclaiming the Easter message: They learn that Jesus is risen and are entrusted with this message. Theme—Easter Struggle. This is one of the most difficult times of the year for families. Joy which pervades the gospel is also tinged with the pain and difficulty of living out the Easter proclamation: the women’s message of the risen Jesus is not believed!

**April 15—Easter 2:** Acts 5:12-16. The healing power of the risen Jesus continues to pervade the life of the early Jerusalem Christian community.

It should also be borne in mind that the *liturgical proclamation of the word of God*, especially in the eucharistic assembly, is not so much a time for meditation and catechesis as a *dialogue between God and his people*, a dialogue in which the wonders of salvation are proclaimed and the demands of the covenant are continually restated. On their part, the People of God are drawn to respond to this dialogue of love by giving thanks and praise, also by demonstrating their fidelity to the task of continual conversion.